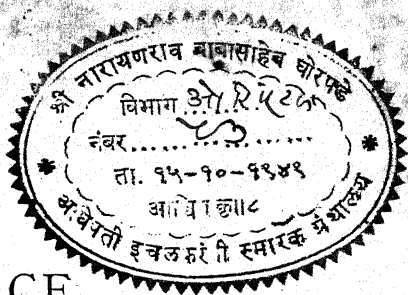


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# THE PLACE OF PEACE.

BY



ANNIE BESANT.

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## THE PLACE OF PEACE.

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THE rush, the turmoil, the hurry of modern life are in everybody's mouth as matter of complaint. "I have no time" is the commonest of excuses. Reviews serve for books; leading articles for political treatises; lectures for investigation. More and more the attention of men and women is fastened on the superficial things of life; small prizes of business success, petty crowns of social supremacy, momentary notoriety in the world of politics or of letters—for these things men and women toil, intrigue and strive. Their work must show immediate results, else it is regarded as failure; the winningpost must always be in sight, to be passed by a swift brief effort with the roar of

slighted by one, praised by another? We regain perspective by our distance from the whirlpool, by our isolation from its tossing waters, and we see how small a part these outer things should play in the true life of man.

So distance in time as well as distance in space gives balanced judgment on the goods and ills of life. We look back, after ten years have slipped away, at the trials, the joys, the disappointments of the time that then was, and we marvel why we spent so much of our life-energy on things so little worth. Even life's sharpest pains seem strangely unreal thus contemplated by a personality that has greatly changed. Our whole life was bound up in the life of another, and all of worth that it held for us seemed to dwell in the one beloved. We thought that our life was laid waste, our heart broken, when that one trust was betrayed. But as time went on the wound healed and new flowers sprang up along our pathway, till to-day we can look back without a quiver on an agony that then well-nigh shattered life. Or we broke with a friend for a bitter word; how foolish seem our anger and excitement, looking back over the ten years' gulf. Or we were madly delighted with a hardly-won success: how trivial it looks, and how exaggerated our triumph, when we

see it now in due proportion in the picture of our life ; then it filled our sky, now it is but a point.

But our philosophic calm, as we contemplate the victories and defeats of our past across the interval of space or time, suffers an ignominious breach when we return to our daily life and find it not. All the old trivialities, in new dresses, engross us ; old joys and sorrows, with new faces, seize us. "The tumultuous senses and organs hurry away by force the heart." And so once more we begin to wear out our lives by petty cares, petty disputes, petty longings, petty disappointments.

Must this be always so? Since we must live in the world and play our part in its drama of life, must we be at the mercy of all these passing objects? Or, though we must dwell among them in place and be surrounded with them in time, can we find the Place of Peace, as though we were far away? We can, and this is the truth that underlies the superficial answer we have already found.

Man is an Immortal Being, clad in a garb of flesh, which is vivified and moved by desires and passions, and which he links to himself by a thread of his immortal nature. This thread is the mind, and this mind, unsubdued and inconstant, wanders out among the things of earth, is moved by the passions.

and desires, hopes and fears, longs to taste all cups of sense-delights, is dazzled and deafened by the radiance and the tumult of its surroundings. And thus, as Arjuna complained, the "mind is full of agitation, turbulent, strong, and obstinate." Above this whirling mind, serene and passionless witness, dwells the True Self, the Spiritual Ego of man. Below there may be storm, but above there is calm, and there is the Place of Peace. For that Self is eternal, and what to it are the things of time, save as they bring experience, the knowledge of good and evil? So often, dwelling in its house of clay, it has known birth and death, gains and losses, joys and griefs, pleasures and pains, that it sees them all pass by as a moving phantasmagoria, and no ripple ruffles its passionless serenity. Does agony affect its outer case, it is but a notice that harmony has been broken, and the pain is welcome as pointing to the failure and as bearing lesson of avoidance of that whence it sprang. For the True Self has to conquer the material plane, to purify and sublimate it, and only by suffering can it learn how to perform its work.

Now the secret of reaching that Place of Peace lies in our learning to identify our consciousness with the True, instead of with the apparent, Self. We

identify ourselves with our minds, our brain minds, active in our bodies. We identify ourselves with our passions and desires, and say *we* hope or *we* fear. We identify ourselves with our bodies, the mere machinery wherewith we affect the material world. And so, when all these parts of our nature are moved by contact with external things and feel the whirl of the material life around them, *we* also in consciousness are affected, and "the uncontrolled heart, following the dictates of the moving passions, snatcheth away" our "spiritual knowledge, as the storm the bark upon the raging ocean." Then excitement, loss of balance, irritability, injured feelings, resentments, follies, pain—all that is most separated from peace and calm and strength.

The way to begin to tread the Path that leads to the Place of Peace is to endeavour to identify our consciousness with the True Self, to see as it sees, to judge as it judges. We cannot do it—that goes without saying—but we can begin to try. And the means are: disengagement from the objects of the senses, carelessness as to results, and meditation, ever renewed, on the True Self. Let us consider each of these means.

The first of these can be gained only by a constant and wise self-discipline. We can cultivate

indifference to small discomforts, to pleasures of the table, to physical enjoyments, bearing with good-humoured tolerance outward things as they come, neither shunning nor courting small pleasures or pains. Gradually, without growing morbid or self-conscious, we shall become frankly indifferent, so that small troubles that upset people continually in daily life will pass unnoticed. And this will leave us free to help our neighbours, whom they do disturb, by shielding them unobtrusively, and so smoothing life's pathway for feet tenderer than our own. In learning this, moderation is the keynote. "This divine discipline, Arjuna, is not to be attained by the man who eateth more than enough or too little, nor by him who hath a habit of sleeping much, nor by him who is given to overwatching. The meditation which destroyeth pain is produced in him who is moderate in eating and in recreation, of moderate exertion in his actions, and regulated in sleeping and waking." The body is not to be shattered : it is to be trained.

The second of these methods is "carelessness as to results." This does not mean that we are not to notice the results of our actions in order to learn from them how to guide our steps. We gain experience by such study of results, and so learn Wisdom.

But it does mean that when an action has been done with our best judgment and strength and with pure intent, then we should let it go, metaphorically, and feel no anxiety about its result. The action done is beyond recall, and we gain nothing by worry and by anxiety. When its results appear, we note them for instruction, but we neither rejoice nor mourn over them. Remorse or jubilation takes away our attention from, and weakens us in, the performance of our *present* duty, and there is no time for either. Suppose the results are evil, the wise man says: "I made a mistake, and must avoid a similar blunder in future; but remorse will only weaken my present usefulness and will not lessen the results of my mistaken action. So instead of wasting time in remorse, I will set to work to do better." The value of thus separating oneself from results lies in the calmness of mind thus obtained and the concentration brought to bear on each action. "Whoever in acting dedicates his actions to the Supreme Spirit [the One Self] and puts aside all selfish interest in their result, is untouched by sin, even as the leaf of the lotus is unaffected by the waters. The truly devoted, for the purification of the heart, perform actions with their bodies, their minds, their understanding, and their senses, putting away all self-interest. The man who is devoted and not attached

to the fruit of his actions obtains tranquillity; whilst he who through desire has attachment for the fruit of action is bound down thereby."

The third method, meditation, is the most efficacious and the most difficult. It consists of a constant endeavour to realize one's identity with one's True Self, and to become self-conscious here as it. "To whatsoever object the inconstant mind goeth out he should subdue it, bring it back, and place it upon the Spirit." It is a work of a lifetime, but it will bring us to the Place of Peace. The effort needs to be continually renewed, patiently persisted in. It may be aided by fixing on definite hours, at which, for a few moments, we may withdraw ourselves like the turtle into its shell, and remember that we are not transitory but eternal, and that passing incidents can affect us not at all. With the gradual growth of this power of remaining "in the Self" comes not only Peace but Wisdom, for absence of personal desires, and recognition of our immortal nature, leave us free to judge all things without bias and without prejudice. "This tranquil state attained, therefrom shall soon result a separation from all troubles; and his mind being thus at ease, fixed upon one object, it embraceth wisdom from all sides. The man whose heart and mind are



not at rest is without wisdom." Thus "being possessed of patience, he by degrees finds rest," and "supreme bliss surely cometh to the sage whose mind is thus at peace ; whose passions and desires are thus subdued ; who is thus in the True Self and free from sin."

This is the three-fold Path that leads to the Place of Peace, to dwell wherein ever is to have conquered Time and Death. The "path winds steeply uphill all the way," but the pinions of the Dove of Peace fan the wearied brow of the pilgrim, and at last, at last, he finds calm that naught can ruffle.

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THE MEANING  
AND THE  
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## The Meaning AND the Use of Pain.

[A lecture given at the Blavatsky Lodge.]

I PROPOSE to take for to-night a matter which is full of deep interest, I think, to everyone, as everyone comes in the way of it—the Meaning and the Use of Pain. First of all as to the meaning. You may remember that when I was speaking here, I think the last time, I tried to explain to you something of the nature of man and the way in which man's true Self, his innermost Self, was to be regarded as the man working in the different bodies or sheaths, and so manifesting consciousness in different ways. You may remember that I laid considerable stress on the fact that it is always the Self that is working, and that if we want to understand the human constitution we must realize that the spiritual Self lies at the root of all activities, and that the different characteristics of the activities depend not on a difference in the Self, but on a difference in the medium—or the qualities—through which it is at work. Now, I want you to start with that conception to-night, adding to it another which I think I mentioned previously, but which is essential for the work that I have to do now—to explain to you the meaning and the use of pain.

The spiritual Self is conscious on its own plane from the very beginning. Offspring of the Universal

Consciousness, what else could it be? But as it descends into this manifested universe, and as it clothes itself in body after body, or in sheath after sheath, the eyes, so to speak, of the Self become blinded by these successive veils that it wraps around it, and so when it arrives at the lowest stage of its manifestation—this physical universe in which we are—the Spirit has become blinded by Matter, and is no longer conscious of its own high destiny or of its own essential nature in the physical universe.

Now, it is this blinded Self, as we know, that comes into the manifested universe for the sake of learning and of gathering experience. Let us think of it for a moment as wearing those bodies that by this time must have become so familiar to you—the body in which it *thinks*, the mind or mentality; the body in which it *feels*, that we generally speak of as the “body of desire,” because feeling and desire are so very closely connected, and feelings of pleasure and of pain arise from contact with things from without which work on this body of desire and make it to be either attracted to or repelled from external objects.

Think, then, for a moment of the Self clothed in this body of desire, and blinded by it to its own real nature and to the true conditions in which it finds itself. It will be attracted by all sorts of external objects; attracted by those from which it gains the sensation of pleasure, repelled, of course, by those from which it feels the sensation of pain. So that coming into this world—of which it knows nothing, you must remember, for I am taking it in the very earliest stages of its experience—coming into this world of which it knows nothing, it will naturally be strongly attracted to that which gives it pleasure by contact, which makes it feel that which it recognizes as joy or happiness or content. Thus attracted to everything which appears to it desirable, it will often find that the gratification of desire is followed

by suffering. Attracted by the desirable object, and without experience which would enable it to distinguish and to discriminate, it flings itself, as it were, towards this attractive thing, only knowing that it feels pleasure in the contact. Presently out of this contact, which was pleasurable, pain grows up; and by that pain it finds that it has flung itself against something that is not desirable, but repellent. And over and over and over again it will have this experience; constantly reiterated it will find this lesson, which is taught it by the external universe.

Let us take two very common animal appetites which, thus attracted and gratified by pleasure, turn into sources of pain. Let us take that of attractive food, which would work on the sense of taste, which is part of the body of desire; this food will attract the sense of taste, and the unconscious Spirit—unconscious, that is, on this plane as to the results that will follow—is run away with by this pleasure of contact; if I may repeat the old Eastern simile that I have used so often, that the senses are like horses that are yoked to the chariot of the body, and that carry away the Soul towards the objects of desire. It will gratify, then, the sense of taste to excess; it will pass into gluttony. The result of this gratification of the sense of taste without experience will be the pain that will follow on the over-gratification. So again if it gratifies the sense of taste, say by over-drinking, by the taking of alcohol. There again pain will follow on the gratification of the immediate desire. And when this has been repeated over and over and over again, this Spirit—which as Soul is able to *think*—connects the two things together, connects the gratification of the desire with the pain which follows on that gratification, and in this way it gradually comes to understand that there are laws in the universe connected with its physical body, and that if it comes into contact with those laws and tries to violate them, it will suffer as a result. It is just as

though a person flung himself against an invisible wall and was bruised by the contact. Over and over again a person might thus fling himself, attracted by some object visible on the other side this invisible barrier; but if, every time, he bruised himself, he would learn to connect the going after that object with the pain which he felt. Thus there would grow up in his mind the idea of sequence, of cause and effect, of the relationship existing between the gratification and the suffering which followed after it; in this way there would become impressed on this infant Soul that is learning its lessons, that there is something in the world that is stronger than itself—a Law which it cannot break; a Law which it may endeavour to violate but which it cannot violate, and which will prove its existence by the suffering which is inflicted when the Soul flings itself against that barrier. And thus with object of desire after object of desire this lesson will be learned, until an accumulated mass of experience will gradually be gained by the Soul, and it will learn by pain to regulate its desires and no longer to let the horses of the senses gallop whithersoever they will, but to curb them and rein them in, and permit them only to go along the roads that are really desirable. Thus the lesson of self-control will be the result of this painful experience.

Now it may be said here, or thought, that after all we have this body of desire in common with the lower animal, and that the lower animal is in one curious way distinct from man: that it is mostly guided to the avoidance of this painful experience by what we call instinct; that while man has the experience constantly until he learns self-control, the animal by an innate inherited experience, as it has been called, which we speak of as instinct, is, to a very great extent at least, preserved from this experience of pain. And that is so. Observing the fact, we ask the reason. And the reason is not far to seek. First, I ought perhaps to say, in order to guard against

possibility of mistake, that people to some extent exaggerate the force of instinct in the highest animals. In the lower animals the rule of instinct is fairly complete. In the higher animals it is less complete than in the lower, and some experience is often needed by them before the instinct becomes a thoroughly safe guide for them. And the reason in their case, and the deeper reason in our own case, is this: that in man you have not only to deal with this body of desire—which, if it were alone, would be guided by an external law, which would direct it towards the objects that were healthful and health-giving and make it avoid the objects which were fatal or dangerous—but you have in man the coming in of the Soul: that is, of the individualized Spirit, which is not to be compelled by a Law from without, but evolved by a Law from within; it is not simply to be forced into conformity with outside Nature by the compulsion to which the mineral, the vegetable, and the animal kingdoms are subjected; it is no longer the case of evolution in the aggregate, of the collective evolution which, in order that it may take place effectively, must be under the control of an external Law. Man is to take his evolution into his own hands; his evolution is to be by experience and not by compulsion; for at this period of evolution Spirit has become individualized by the sheath of mind, and the accumulating experience of the reincarnating Soul is to take the place of the compulsory education of the lower realms in Nature.

And so it is the presence of Manas, or mind, in man that makes this element of pain so necessary a part of his education. He is able to remember, he is able to compare, he is able to draw this link of causation between the things that form the sequence of events; and just because he has this power of thought, of mind, he is able to take his growth into his own hands, that he may become a fellow-worker with Nature; not merely a brick as it were in her edifice,



but a self-conscious builder, taking part in that building of the whole.

And so gradually by this education of pain, working upon mind through the body of desire, this knowledge of Law in the external universe grows up. So that here the meaning of pain is hostile contact with Law, the effort to break Law that never can succeed; and the use of pain is the gaining of the knowledge of Law, and so the guiding and the education of the lower nature by the reasoning intelligence.

Let us pass from that view of pain to another. By pain this growing Soul has learned the existence of Law. The next use that is found in pain is a deeper one. By pain is rooted out desire for every object in the external universe, found, in the language of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, to prove one of "the wombs of pain." Desire is that which draws the Soul to re-birth; desire is that which fundamentally causes the manifestation of the universe. It was when "Desire first arose in the bosom of the Eternal" that the germ of the manifested universe appeared; and so always it is desire that leads to manifestation—whether of the whole or of the part; and desire continually draws back the Soul over and over again to earth. Notice that it is desire which draws the Soul *outwards*, always outwards, to the external. And the education of the Soul consists in this passing out into the external, gathering there all knowledge, and then by experience losing its taste for the external and carrying inwards the knowledge it has obtained. But suppose that objects of desire remained desirable, then there would be no end to the revolution of the wheel of births and deaths; then there could be no garnering, as it were, of knowledge, and no real evolution of the highest possibilities. For remember that human perfection is not the end of our growth; it is the end of the present cycle; but this is only the preparation for another, and those who become perfect men in the present cycle are those who, from the calmness of

Nirvâna, are to come out in the next period of manifestation no longer men to be educated, but Builders and Gods to guide the next manifested universe, passing on into that higher sphere of activity and utilizing there the experiences that here they have won. It is thus essential that these manifesting Souls that to-day are human but in future millenniums are to be Divine—it is necessary that they shall not only gather knowledge but shall also carry it back with them, and so make it part of their own future being; and in order that this may be done, desire must gradually change its nature until at last it vanishes away. The objects of the lowest external world must become undesirable to the Soul that has gained knowledge; the objects of each phase of the external world, subtle or physical, must become undesirable, everything must become undesirable save the Eternal, which is the essence of the Soul itself: and so gradually the Soul learns by pain in the physical universe to get rid of desire.

There is no other way in which desire can be conquered. You might, if there were no pain in the gratification of these external desires, you might by strong will hold back the horses and prevent them from galloping along the road along which you did not choose that they should go. But you want to do more than hold them back by force—that is a very elementary stage of the progress of the Soul: you want them no longer to *desire* to gallop after these objects; that is, you want to cut off the very root of desire, and that can only be by the objects that once attracted losing their power of attraction, so that they no longer can draw the Soul outwards; then the Soul, having exhausted everything that it can learn from the object, and having found it productive of pain in the end, no longer finds it desirable, but casts it aside, and carries away only the knowledge it has gained. For the Soul is like the bee that visits the flower; it does not need to remain always in the flower, it needs

only the honey that the flower contains; when it has gathered the honey, the flower is no longer desirable to it. And when the Soul has gathered the honey of knowledge from the flowers of earth, then it is the use of pain that it no longer feels desire for the flower; it has gained from it all that is needed for the lesson, and the pain destroys desire and throws the Soul inward on itself. If you think it over at your leisure you will not, I think, be able to invent any other way of really getting rid of desire. And unless you can get rid of desire for the things of the physical world, you will never feel the inner drawing, first to the things of the mind, and then to those of the Higher Life, which it is the very object of the Soul's evolution to make the experience of all that are born into the world.

But what other use has pain? We have found out two—the learning of Law and the gradual extirpation of desire. The next lesson that we learn through pain is the transitory nature of all that is not of the essence of the Spirit itself. In one of the many allegories of the Hindû Scriptures, you may read how the God of Death, looking at men and sorrowing over their sorrows, wept as he contemplated Humanity; and as the tears of Yama dropped upon the earth they turned into diseases and miseries which afflicted human kind. Why should the pity of the God have been turned into scourges for the torturing of man? These allegories are always worth thinking over, for always under the veil of the allegory is hidden some truth which reaches you the more surely because of the simile under which it is veiled. What is the God of Death? He is, as it were, the incarnation of change. Sometimes we hear of Yama as Destroyer; the truer word is Regenerator; for there is no such thing as destruction in the manifested universe. Always that which on one side is death on another side is birth; and that which is change and which seems to destroy, is that which in another aspect is

giving new form and new shape to the life which is seeking embodiment. And so Yama, the God of Death, is the great representative of change—the change which marks manifestation, the change which is in everything save in the Eternal itself; and inasmuch as he who is change incarnate weeps over men, it is natural that his tears should be the things that teach men the transitory nature of all that surrounds them. And these miseries and diseases into which turn the tears of the God of Death are the lessons which in guise of pain bring the most useful teaching of all—that nothing that is transitory can satisfy the Soul, and that only by learning the transitory nature of the lower life will the Soul turn to that in which true happiness and satisfaction must lie. Thus, the teaching of the transitoriness of all things is the object of these tears of Yama, and he shows the deepest compassion in the lessons that by pain he gives to human kind. For in this fashion, by disease and misery, by poverty and by grief, we learn that everything that surrounds us—not only in the physical world, but also in the region of desire, and in the region of the mind itself—that all these things are changing, and that in the changing that which is changeless may never find its rest. For at heart we are the Eternal and not the transient; the centre of our life, the very Self within us, is immortal and eternal, it can never change nor die. Therefore, nothing that changes can satisfy it; nothing over which Death has power can bring to it final happiness and peace. But it must learn this lesson through pain, and only in that learning lies the possibility of final joy. Thus the Soul also learns the difference between the stages of transitoriness; very slow are these lessons in the learning, and many a life it takes to complete them. At first the Soul will not think of the Eternal being that in which it must rest; but it will learn to turn from the physical to the mental, to turn from the sensuous to the intellectual, because

relatively the one is permanent to the other, and the happinesses of the mind are lasting as compared with the pleasures of the body. And in the slow course of evolution that lesson is learned long before the lessons of the Spirit are touched, and man becomes a higher creature when he has learned to dominate the animal side and to find satisfaction in the mind and in the intelligence, so that the pleasures of the æsthetic tastes overbear the pleasures of the body, and the pleasures of the mind and of the intellect and of the intelligence are more attractive than the pleasures of the lower senses.

Thus man is gradually evolving to-day, and the great work of human evolution at the present time—speaking of the average human evolution—is not the evolution of the Spirit, but this evolution of the relatively permanent as compared with the senses and of the body in which the waking consciousness of man is still so active. So that what man on the average needs to do is to turn his desires from the transient to the relatively permanent, and rather to cultivate the mind and the intelligence and the artistic side of Nature, instead of seeking the gratification of the senses which he has in common with the lower forms of animal life. And those are helping human evolution who are turning away from the life of the body and are training themselves in the life of the mind, who are seeking the relatively permanent; although in its turn it will be found to be transitory, still it is a step upward, it is the drawing away of desire from the body to the mind, from the senses to the internal organ, from sensations to ideas and images, and that is part of the experience of the indrawing Soul, which draws itself away from the senses and fixes itself for a while in the inner organ of the mind. And then that inner organ is also found only to give rise to things that are transitory. See, yet, how great is the gain; for conflict between men is over when the desire turns to the intelligence, to

the inner organ instead of to the outer things of sense. The things of sense are limited; and men fight the one with the other in order to get their share of a limited quantity. The things of the tastes, the higher tastes, and of the intelligence are practically unlimited, and there is no conflict between men for them; for no man is the poorer because his brother is richly gifted artistically or intellectually; none has his own share diminished because his brother's share is great. And so humanity progresses from competition to coöperation, and learns the lesson of Brotherhood: that the richer you are in intellect the more you can give and the less you need grudge, seeing that we are going upwards to the Higher Life where all is giving, and where none desires to seize for self. For in this middle region of intellect and of the higher tastes and emotions, there is no need for grudging; but all may share what they have, and find themselves after the sharing the richer and not the poorer for the giving.

But even then it is found that satisfaction does not lie that way, for still it is of the nature of desire. On this I pause one moment. On the realization of the principle that I am now going to put to you depends the whole direction of your life. If you seek gratification of desire you will never find happiness, for every desire that is gratified gives birth to a new desire, and the more desires you gratify the more open mouths there are which demand that they shall be filled. Says an ancient Scripture:

As well might you try to put out a fire by pouring upon it melted butter, as try to get rid of desire by filling it with the objects of desire

—a saying that is worthy your long and thoughtful consideration. For if happiness does not lie that way, then the great majority of people, especially in civilized lands, are on the wrong road to happiness: they will never reach it along the road they travel. And if you notice the demand of modern life, it is

always for more of the same thing which is already possessed—that is, for the multiplication of the objects of desire, and so the continual increase of the longings which cannot be gratified. I might put it in a somewhat rough form which comes to my mind, because it was quoted to me the other day as an illustration of the way in which, with the narrowness of thought, this idea of more and more of the same thing comes out increasingly. You remember the story of the rustic who was asked what would make him completely happy, and he said, "To sit upon a gate and swing, and chew fat bacon all day." Then he was asked, "Suppose you could have something more to make you happy, what would you ask for?" And he said, "More swinging on a gate and more fat bacon." Now, that is a rough way of putting it; but it is essentially the answer the majority of people make. They may have a higher desire, I grant, than sitting on a gate and eating fat bacon; but the principle of their desire is the same as the principle of the rustic—that they want more of these things that they already possess, and that they do not realize that happiness does not lie in this increasing gratification of desires, but in the transmuting of the desire for the transitory into the aspiration to the Eternal, and the complete changing of the nature from that which seeks to enjoy to that which seeks to give. And if this be true, then in your search for happiness you had better consider on what line you are travelling; for if you be travelling along the line of the gratification of desire, then no matter how much you refine it, you are travelling along a road that is practically an endless circle, and that will always leave you unsatisfied and never give you the bliss which is the natural goal of the Spirit in man.

And thus after a while, by this absence of satisfaction, which is pain, the realization comes to the Soul that this is not the road, and it grows weary of change. All these outer objects of body and of mind

lose their attractive force; weary of the change which it finds everywhere in the lower world, it no longer goes outward but it turns its face inward and upward. It went outward to the senses and failed; then it drew into the mind, but the mind is outward from the standpoint of the Spirit, and again it failed; always beaten back by pain, always beaten back by the dissatisfaction that is the most wearisome pain of all. And then, finally, it learns its lesson, and it turns away from that which is without, it turns within; and then it finds the beginning of peace, the first touch of real, of essential satisfaction.

And another use of pain, a more inner lesson now: for we have reached the point where the Soul has distinguished itself from the body of desire and even from the mind itself. And still it has not got outside the reach of pain, for it has not yet quite found its centre, it is only seeking it still; and although it knows that it is not the body, nor the senses, nor the mind, it still finds itself susceptible of pain that comes from within, of contacts that translate themselves as pain. And coming into contact with others—with the thoughts and the feelings and the judgment of others—it constantly finds itself pained by misjudgments and mistranslations, by unkind thoughts and unkind feelings; and if the Soul has by this time gained wisdom, as it must have done if it has followed the path along which we have been tracing it, then it will begin to ask itself: Why do I still feel pain? What is there, not in the outside, but *in me* that gives rise to pain? For it has now passed beyond the ignorance which makes this outer thing appear as the inflicter of pain, and it relates to itself the element that causes pain, and realizes that nothing can touch it save itself, which is in truth responsible for all. And if it feels pain the cause of pain must lie in itself, and not, after all, in the external object; for if the Soul were perfect nothing that is outside could avail to give it pain; and if it feel pain, it is a



sign of imperfection, that it is not withdrawn wholly from the lower nature which is not itself. And then it begins to use pain instead of merely feeling it; and there is a distinction between the two. It is no longer at the mercy of pain, but it takes pain into its own hand as an instrument and uses it for its own purpose; when it finds this pain—we will say which comes from unkind action, or from misjudgment of motive or of conduct—the Soul takes the pain in hand as a sculptor might take a chisel, and with this instrument of pain it strikes at its own personality; for it knows that if it were not for this personality which is selfish, it would not feel the pain at all, and that it may use the pain as a chisel to cut off this personal weakness, and so remain serene and untroubled amid the conflicts of the world.

For thus has it been with all those who have risen above personality, those great and liberated Souls Whom we speak of as Masters, and Who always work for the world, no matter how the world misjudges Them. It was said by one of Them: "We feel the slanders and the criticisms of mankind just as much as the heights of the Himālayas feel the hissing of the serpents that glide around their feet." There is *there* no personality which can be hurt by misjudgment, no personality which can suffer by misconstruction. They bestow a blessing, and the man who receives it knows not whence it comes; in his ignorance he jeers or scoffs, or accuses the Masters unknowing what They are, and translating Them into himself as though he were They. Are They hurt? No; to the misconstruction They answer with pity, to the insult They answer with forgiveness, for in Them there is nothing that can be hurt by misconstruction; only They can feel pity for the sake of the one who is blinded and who cannot see—pity for the blinded brother who by his wrong thought is injuring his own Soul. The moon is not injured by anyone who would throw mud against it; the mud

falls back on the one who throws it and soils his garments; the light of the moon remains pure and untouched by the mud of earth. And so, as the Soul is thus growing onwards to the light, it uses pain as an instrument to destroy personality and those subtle things of the personality that even the strong Soul may be blind to; it takes the pain as the most merciful of messages to tell it of its own weakness, of its own fault, and of its own mistake. For as you grow in knowledge you realize that your worst enemy is not the outside fault that you recognize, but the inner blindness that does not see the place of danger, and does not know that it does not see. When you fall, and know you fall, then the danger is but a small one; it is when you fall and know not that you have fallen that the enemies of the Soul rejoice. And if there comes pain from the falling then the pain is welcome; for that tells of the danger and may open our eyes to the slip that has been made. In that way pain, as I said, is no longer an infliction, it is welcome as a warning and as an instrument that the Soul may use; it is now the surgeon's knife that cuts away the spot of danger; no longer to be resisted as an enemy but to be welcomed as a friend.

And still pain has another use, now a matter of choice by the free Soul, the Soul that means to be strong, not for itself but for the helping of the world, the Soul that realizes that it has to live for others, and knows that it can only learn to live for others if it is strong in itself; then it will choose pain because only thus can it learn endurance, it will choose pain because only thus can it learn patience. Those who never suffer must always remain weak, and only in the stress and the agony of combat will the Soul learn to endure, though the combat, remember, is still a sign of weakness. Were we strong we should not need to fight; but we can only gain the strength that shall not need to struggle in the agony of the struggle, for then gradually the strength will work

itself into the Soul, and that which once was anxiety and struggle will gain the calm serenity of perfect strength.

And for one other thing the Soul will choose pain—that it may learn sympathy. For even the strong Soul would be useless if it had not learned sympathy. Nay, the strong Soul might be rather dangerous than anything else if it had become strong without compassion, and had learned to gather force while it had not learned to guide that force aright. For force that is only strong and not compassionate may trample instead of raising, and of all things *that* would break, as it were, the heart of the Soul that would fain raise. Strength, not having that touch of sympathy which is keener than all sight and is the very intuition of the Spirit, might be used for mischief and not for helping, it might injure where it desired to help, and might crush where it desired to lift. And so the stronger it is, the more eagerly will the Soul seek this lesson of pain in order that by feeling it may learn to feel, and that by its own pain it may learn how the pains of the world shall be healed; for otherwise we may not learn. Not from without but from within we have to be builded, and all the pains that we have in our imperfections are, as it were, the stones with which the temple of the perfect Spirit is finally built. Pain in the end there will not be; but pain in the building there must be; therefore the Disciple chooses the Path of Woe, because only by woe may he learn compassion, and only as he thrills to every touch from the outer universe will he, who is to be the heart of the universe, be able to send out responsive thrills of healing, which shall pass through all manifested life and carry with them the message of helpfulness and of strength.

Thus then for the uses of pain, though you might find many another. And though I have only taken out a few obvious and simple enough examples, yet they may be helpful in the telling. But is that the

end? Is that the final fate of the Soul? Is pain to be anything more than a use? Is pain the natural atmosphere of the Spirit? They err who believe that sorrow is the end of things; they err who believe that pain and sadness are really the atmosphere in which the Spirit lives. The Spirit is bliss, it is not sorrow; the Spirit is joy, it is not pain; the Spirit is peace, it is not struggle; the essence and the heart of all things is love, is joy, is peace; and the path of pain is the path and not the goal, the Path of Woe is only the means and not the end. For out of that Ocean of Blessedness whence the universe has sprung, spring love and peace and joy unceasing, and those are the heritage of the Spirit out of manifestation. Pain lies in the sheaths in which it is clothed, and not in its essential nature.

Never forget that in the struggle of life! Never let the pain blind your eyes to the joy, nor let the passing anxieties make you unconscious of the bliss which is the core and heart of Being. Pain is passing, bliss is eternal; for bliss is the inner essence of Brahman, the Self of all. Therefore as the Spirit goes onward, therefore as the Spirit grows freer, peace takes the place of struggle, and joy takes the place of pain. Look on the highest face: there is indeed the mark of pain, but of pain that is over and that has been changed into strength and sympathy and compassion, and a deep unending joy. For the final word of the universe is Bliss; the final outcome of Humanity is rest, conscious rest in happiness. And all the messages of pain are in order that the Spirit may gain its liberation; the end is the end of peace, and the manifested side of peace is joy.

## THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

THE Theosophical Society is an international body which was founded at New York, U.S., on the 17th day of November, 1875, with three well defined objects, viz:

FIRST.—*To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.*

SECOND.—*To promote the study of Aryan and other Eastern literatures, religions, philosophies and sciences, and demonstrate the importance of that study.*

THIRD.—*To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the psychic powers latent in man.*

The Fellows of the Society are either members of its Branches (or Lodges) or unattached to any Branch, and in territories where there are sufficient Branches the latter are included in a Section. Each Branch and each Section has complete autonomy in all local affairs. All charters for Branches and diplomas for members draw their sanction from the whole Society, and are signed and sealed in its name by the President and recorded in the particular Section where the member may have been admitted or elected.

The acceptance of the Second and Third objects of the Society is optional with those desiring to enter, the First—Universal Brotherhood—being the only one to which it is expected all applicants will subscribe.

The Society does not pretend to be able to establish at once a Universal Brotherhood among men, but only strives to create a nucleus for such a body, and believes that a careful study of the religions and philosophies of the past as well as of the present day will reveal the common basis upon which all rest and therefore the truth underlying them all. The organization is therefore wholly unsectarian, with no creed or dogma to enforce or impose, its motto being:

THERE IS NO RELIGION HIGHER THAN TRUTH.

Hence in its ranks and coöperating in its work are to be found professors of all faiths as well as those who have none whatever. No restriction is placed on its members save that of loyalty to its one fundamental principle—Universal Brotherhood. Nor is it as a Society to be held responsible for the opinions of its members, who all have a right to hold their own views and to receive for them from their fellow-members

the respect which they in turn should show for the views of others. This toleration and respect is asked from all members as a duty, since it is believed that dogmatism and intolerance have always been the greatest foes to human progress.

The mystical system which gives its name to the Society, and is vaguely known under the general title "Theosophy," is put forward by certain members as at once the result of, and an incentive to, that particular line of study described in the second and third "Objects." They believe that the doctrines, or leading ideas, of Theosophy, both Eastern and Western, are especially worthy of attention at the present time, as suggesting the probable solution of many of the most vexed religious, social, and scientific questions of the day. An extensive literature has sprung up in connection with the Theosophical movement, in which many of these ideas are explained and discussed.

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ON SOME DIFFICULTIES OF  
THE INNER LIFE

BY

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## ON SOME DIFFICULTIES OF THE INNER LIFE

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EVERY one who sets himself in earnest to the living of the Inner Life encounters certain obstacles at the very beginning of the pathway thereto, obstacles which repeat themselves in the experience of each, having their basis in the common nature of men. To each wayfarer they seem new and peculiar to himself, and hence give rise to a feeling of personal discouragement which undermines the strength needed for their surmounting. If it were understood that they form part of the common experience of aspirants, that they are always encountered and constantly over-climbed, it may be that some cheer would be brought to the cast-down neophyte by the knowledge. The grasp of a hand in the darkness, the sound of a voice that says: "Fellow-traveller, I have trodden where you tread and the road is practicable"—these things bring help in the night-time, and such a help-bringer this article would fain be.

One of these difficulties was put to me some time ago by a friend and fellow-wayfarer in connection

with some counsel given as to the purification of the body. He did not in any way traverse the statement made, but said with much truth and insight that for most of us the difficulty lay more with the Inner Man than with his instruments; that for the most of us the bodies we had were quite sufficiently good, or, at the worst, needed a little tuning, but that there was a desperate need for the improvement of the man himself. For the lack of sweet music, the musician was more to blame than his instrument, and if he could be reached and improved his instrument might pass muster. It was capable of yielding much better tones than those produced from it at present, but those tones depended on the fingers that pressed the keys. Said my friend pithily and somewhat pathetically: "I can make my body do what I want; the difficulty is that *I* do not want."

Here is a difficulty that every serious aspirant feels. The improving of the man himself is the chief thing that is needed, and the obstacle of his weakness, his lack of will and of tenacity of purpose, is a far more obstructive one than can be placed in our way by the body. There are many methods known to all of us by which we can build up bodies of a better type if we want to do so, but it is the "wanting" in which we are deficient. We have the knowledge, we recognise the expediency of putting it into practice, but the impulse to do so is lacking. Our

root-difficulty lies in our inner nature; it is inert, the wish to move is absent; it is not that the external obstacles are insurmountable, but that the man himself lies supine and has no mind to climb over them. This experience is being continually repeated by us; there seems to be a want of attractiveness in our ideal; it fails to draw us; we do not wish to realise it, even though we may have intellectually decided that its realisation is desirable. It stands before us like food before a man who is not hungry; it is certainly very good food and he may be glad of it to-morrow, but just now he has no craving for it, and prefers to lie basking in the sunshine rather than to get up and take possession of it.

The problem resolves itself into two questions: Why do I not want that which I see, as a rational being, is desirable, productive of happiness? What can I do to make myself want that which I know to be best for myself and for the world? The spiritual teacher who could answer these questions effectively would do a far greater service to many than one who is only reiterating constantly the abstract desirability of ideals that we all acknowledge, and the imperative nature of obligations that we all admit—and disregard. The machine is here, not wholly ill-made; who can place his finger on the lever, *and make it go*?

The first question must be answered by such an analysis of self-consciousness as may explain this

puzzling duality, the not desiring that which we yet see to be desirable. We are wont to say that self-consciousness is a unit, and yet, when we turn our attention inwards, we see a bewildering multiplicity of "I's," and are stunned by the clamour of opposing voices, all coming apparently from ourselves. Now consciousness—and self-consciousness is only consciousness drawn into a definite centre which receives and sends out—is a unit, and if it appears in the outer world as many, it is not because it has lost its unity, but because it presents itself there through different media. We speak glibly of the vehicles of consciousness, but perhaps do not always bear in mind what is implied in the phrase. If a current from a galvanic battery be led through a series of several different materials, its appearance in the outer world will vary with each wire. In a platinum wire it may appear as light, in an iron one as heat, round a bar of soft iron as magnetic energy, led into a solution as a power that decomposes and recombines. One single energy is present, yet many modes of it appear, for the manifestation of life is always conditioned by its forms, and as consciousness works in the causal, mental, astral, or physical body, the resulting "I" presents very different characteristics. According to the vehicle which, for the time being, it is vitalising, so will be the conscious "I." If it is working in the astral body, it will be the "I" of the senses; if in the mental,

it will be the "I" of the intellect. By illusion, blinded by the material that enwraps it, it identifies itself with the craving of the senses, the reasoning of the intellect, and cries, "I want," "I think." The nature which is developing the germs of bliss and knowledge is the eternal Man, and is the root of sensations and thoughts; but these sensations and thoughts themselves are only the transitory activities in his outer bodies, set up by the contact of his life with the outer life, of the Self with the not-Self. He makes temporary centres for his life in one or other of these bodies, lured by the touches from without that awaken his activity, and working in these he identifies himself with them. As his evolution proceeds, as he himself develops, he gradually discovers that these physical, astral, mental centres are his instruments, not himself; he sees them as parts of the "not-Self" that he has temporarily attracted into union with himself—as he might take up a pen or a chisel; he draws himself away from them, recognising and using them as the tools they are; knows himself to be life—not form, bliss—not desire, knowledge—not thought; and then first is conscious of unity, then alone finds peace. While the consciousness identifies itself with forms, it appears to be multiple; when it identifies itself as life, it stands forth as one.

The next important fact for us is that, as H. P. B. pointed out, consciousness, at the present stage of

evolution, has its centre normally in the astral body. Consciousness learns to know by its capacity of sensation, the sensation which belongs to the astral body. We sensate; that is, we recognise contact with something which is not ourselves, something which arouses in us pleasure, or pain, or the neutral point between. This life of sensation is the greater part of the life of the majority. For those below the average, this life of sensation is the whole life. For a few advanced beings this life of sensation is transcended. The vast majority occupy the various stages which stretch between this life of sensation and that which has transcended such sensation: those of mixed sensation and emotion and thought in diverse proportions, and of emotion and thought in diverse proportions. In the life that is wholly of sensation there is no multiplicity of "I's" and therefore no conflict; in the life that has transcended sensation there is an Inner Ruler, Immortal, and there is no conflict; but in all the ranges between, there are manifold "I's" and among them conflict.

Let us consider this life of sensation as found in the savage of low development. There is an "I," passionate, craving, fierce, grasping, when aroused to activity. But there is no conflict, save with the world outside his physical body. With that he may war, but inner war he knows not. He does what he wants, without questionings beforehand or remorse afterwards; the actions of the body follow

the promptings of desire, and the mind does not challenge, nor criticise, nor condemn. It merely pictures and records, storing up materials for future elaboration. Its evolution is forwarded by the demands made upon it by the "I" of sensations to exert its energies for the gratification of that imperious "I." It is driven into activity by these promptings of desire, and begins to work on its store of observations and remembrances, thus evolving a little reasoning faculty and planning beforehand for the gratification of its master. In this way it develops intelligence, but the intelligence is wholly subordinated to desire, moves under its orders, is the slave of passion. It shows no separate individuality, but is merely the willing tool of the tyrannous desire-"I."

Contest only begins when, after a long series of experiences, the Eternal Man has developed sufficient mind to review and balance up, during his life in the lower mental world between death and birth, the results of his earthly activities. He then marks off certain experiences as resulting in more pain than pleasure, and comes to the conclusion that he will do well to avoid their repetition; he regards them with repulsion and engraves that repulsion on his mental tablets, while he similarly engraves attraction as regards other experiences that have resulted in more pleasure than pain. When he returns to earth, he brings this record with him, as an inner tendency

of his mind, and when the desire—"I" rushes towards an attractive object, recommencing a course of experiences that have led to suffering, he interposes a feeble protest, and another "I"—consciousness working as mind—makes itself felt and heard as regarding these experiences with repulsion, and objecting to being dragged through them. The protest is so weak and the desire so strong that we can scarcely speak of a contest; the desire—"I," long enthroned, rushes over the weakly-protesting rebel, but when the pleasure is over and the painful results follow, the ignored rebel lifts his voice again in a querulous "I told you so," and this is the first sting of remorse. As life succeeds life the mind asserts itself more and more, and the contest between the desire—"I" and the thought—"I" grows fiercer and fiercer, and the agonised cry of the Christian mystic: "I find another law in my members warring against the law of my mind," is repeated in the experience of every evolving Man. The war grows hotter and hotter as, during the devachanic life, the decisions of the Man are more and more strongly impressed on the mind, appearing as innate ideas in the subsequent birth, and lending strength to the thought—"I," which, withdrawing itself from the passions and emotions, regards them as outside itself, and repudiates their claim to control it. But the long inheritance of the past is on the side of the monarch it would discrown, and bitter and many-



fortuned is the war. Consciousness, in its out-going activities, runs easily into the worn channels of the habits of many lives ; on the other hand it is diverted by the efforts of the Man to take control and to turn it into the channels hewn out by his reflections. His will determines the line of the consciousness-forces working in his higher vehicles, while habit largely determines the direction of those working in the desire body. The will, guided by the clear-eyed intelligence, points to the lofty ideal that is seen as a fit object of attainment ; the desire-nature does not want to reach it, is lethargic before it, seeing no beauty that it should desire it, nay, often repelled by the austere outlines of its grave and chastened dignity. "The difficulty is that I do not *want*." We do not want to do that which, in our higher moments, we have resolved to do. The lower "I" is moved by the attraction of the moment rather than by the recorded results of the past that sway the higher, and the real difficulty is to make ourselves feel that the lethargic, or the clamorous, "I" of the lower nature is not the true "I."

How is this difficulty to be overcome? How is it possible to make that which we know to be the higher to be the habitual self-conscious "I" ?

Let no one be discouraged if here it be said that this change is a matter of growth, and cannot be accomplished in a moment. The human Self cannot,

by a single effort, rise to manhood from childhood, any more than a body can change from infancy to maturity in a night. If the statement of the law of growth bring a sense of chill when we regard it as an obstacle in the way of our wish for sudden perfection, let us remember that the other side of the statement is that growth is certain, that it cannot be ultimately prevented, and that if law refuses a miracle it on the other hand gives security. Moreover, we can quicken growth, we can afford the best possible conditions for it, and then rely on the law for our result. Let us then consider the means we can employ for hastening the growth we see to be needed, for transferring the activity of consciousness from the lower to the higher.

The first thing to realise is that the desire-nature is not our Self, but an instrument fashioned by the Self for its own using; and next that it is a most valuable instrument, and is merely being badly used. Desire, emotion, is the motive power in us, and stands ever between the thought and the action. Intellect sees, but it does not move, and a man without desires and emotions would be a mere spectator of life. The Self must have evolved some of its loftiest powers ere it can forego the use of the desires and emotions; for aspirants the question is how to use them instead of being used by them, how to discipline them, not how to destroy. We would fain "want" to reach the highest, since

without this wanting we shall make no progress at all. - We are held back by wanting to unite ourselves with objects transitory, mean and narrow ; cannot we push ourselves forward by wanting to unite ourselves with the permanent, the noble and the wide ? Thus musing, we see that what we need is to cultivate the emotions, and direct them in a way that will purify and ennoble the character. The basis of all emotions on the side of progress is love, and this is the power which we must cultivate. George Eliot well said : " The first condition of human goodness is something to love ; the second, something to reverence." Now reverence is only love directed to a superior, and the aspirant should seek one more advanced than himself to whom he can direct his love and reverence. Happy the man who can find such a one when he seeks, for such finding gives him the most important condition for turning emotion from a retarding force into a lifting one, and for gaining the needed power to " want " that which he knows to be the best. We cannot love without seeking to please, and we cannot reverence without taking joy in the approval of the one we revere. Hence comes a constant stimulus to improve ourselves, to build up character, to purify the nature, to conquer all in us that is base, to strive after all that is worthy. We find ourselves quite spontaneously " wanting " to reach a high ideal, and the great motive power is sent along the channels

hewn out for it by the mind. There is no way of utilising the desire-nature more certain and more effective than the making of such a tie, the reflection in the lower world of that perfect bond which links the disciple to the Master.

Another useful way of stimulating the desire-nature as a lifting force is to seek the company of any who are more advanced in the spiritual life than we are ourselves. It is not necessary that they should teach us orally, or indeed talk to us at all. Their very presence is a benediction, harmonising, raising, inspiring. To breathe their atmosphere, to be encircled by their magnetism, to be played on by their thoughts—these things ennoble us, unconsciously to ourselves. We value words too highly, and depreciate unduly the subtler silent forces of the Self, which, "sweetly and mightily ordering all things," create within the turbulent chaos of our personality the sure bases of peace and truth.

Less potent, but still sure, is the help that may be gained by reading any book which strikes a noble note of life, whether by lifting up a great ideal, or presenting an inspiring character for our study. Such books as the *Bhagavad Gîtâ*, *The Voice of the Silence*, *Light on the Path*, *The Imitation of Christ*, are among the most powerful of such aids to the desire-nature. We are apt to read too exclusively for knowledge, and lose the moulding force that lofty

thought on great ideals may exercise over our emotions. It is a useful habit to read every morning a few sentences from some such book as those named above, and to carry these sentences with us through the day, thus creating around us an atmosphere that is protective to ourselves and beneficial to all with whom we come into contact.

Another absolutely essential thing is daily meditation—a quiet half-hour in the morning, ere the turmoil of the day begins, during which we deliberately draw ourselves away from the lower nature, recognise it as an instrument and not our Self, centre ourselves in the highest consciousness we can dream, and feel it as our real Self. “That which is Being, Bliss and Knowledge, that am I. Life, Love and Light, that am I.” For our essential nature is divine, and the effort to realise it helps its growth and manifestation. Pure, passionless, peaceful, it is “the Star that shines within,” and that Star is our Self. We cannot yet steadily dwell in the Star, but as we try daily to rise to it, some gleam of its radiance illumines the illusory “I” made of the shadows amid which we live. To this ennobling and peace-giving contemplation of our divine destiny we may fitly rise by worshipping with the most fervent devotion of which we are capable—if we are fortunate enough to feel such devotion—the Father of the worlds and the Divine Man whom we reverence as Master. Resting on

that Divine Man as the Helper and Lover of all who seek to rise—call Him Buddha, Christ, Shri Krishna, Master, what we will—we may dare to raise our eyes to the ONE from Whom we come, to Whom we go, and in the confidence of realised sonship murmur, "I and the Father are One," "I am That."

One of the most distressing of the difficulties which the aspirant has to face arises from the ebb and flow of his feelings, the changes in the emotional atmosphere through which he sees the external world as well as his own character with its powers and its weaknesses. He finds that his life consists of a series of ever-varying states of consciousness, of alternating conditions of thought and feeling. At one time he is vividly alive, at another quiescently dead; now he is cheerful, then morbid; now overflowing, then dry; now earnest, then indifferent; now devoted, then cold; now aspiring, then lethargic. He is constant only in his changeableness, persistent only in his variety. And the worst of it is that he is unable to trace these effects to any very definite causes; they "come and go, impermanent," and are as little predicable as the summer winds. Why was meditation easy, smooth, fruitful, yesterday? why is it hard, irregular, barren, to-day? Why should that noble idea have fired him with enthusiasm a week ago, yet leave him chill now? Why was he full of love and devotion but a few days

since, but finds himself empty now, gazing at his ideal with cold, lack-lustre eyes? The facts are obvious, but the explanation escapes him ; he seems to be at the mercy of chance, to have slipped out of the realm of law.

It is this very uncertainty which gives the poignancy to his distress. The understood is always the manageable, and when we have traced an effect to its cause we have gone far on the way to its control. All our keenest sufferings have in them this constituent of uncertainty ; we are helpless because we are ignorant. It is the uncertainty of our emotional moods that terrifies us, for we cannot guard against that which we are unable to foresee. How then may we reach a place where these moods shall not plague us, a rock on which we can stand while the waves surge around us ?

The first step towards the place of balance is taken when we recognise the fact—though the statement of it may sound a little brutal—that our moods do not matter. There is no constant relation between our progress and our feelings ; we are not necessarily advancing when the flow of emotion rejoices us, nor retrograding when its ebb distresses us. These changing moods are among the lessons that life brings to us, that we may learn to distinguish between the Self and the not-Self, and to realise ourselves as the Self. The Self changes not, and that which changes is not our Self, but is part

of the transitory surroundings in which the Self is clothed and amid which it moves. This wave that sweeps over us is not the Self, but is only a passing manifestation of the not-Self. "Let it toss and swirl and foam, it is not I." Let consciousness realise this, if only for a moment, and the force of the wave is spent, and the firm rock is felt under the feet. Withdrawing from the emotion, we no longer feel it as a part of ourselves, and thus ceasing to pour our life into it as a self-expression, we break off the connection which enabled it to become a channel of pain. This withdrawal of consciousness may be much facilitated if, in our quiet times, we try to understand and to assign to their true causes, these distressing emotional alternations. We shall thus at least get rid of some of the helplessness and perplexity which, as we have already seen, are due to ignorance.

These alternations of happiness and depression are primarily manifestations of that law of periodicity, or law of rhythm, which guides the universe. Night and day alternate in the physical life of man as do happiness and depression in his emotional life. As the ebb and flow in the ocean, so are the ebb and flow in human feelings. There are tides in the human heart as in the affairs of men and as in the sea. Joy follows sorrow and sorrow follows joy, as surely as death follows birth and birth death. That this is so is not only a theory of a law, but it is also



a fact to which witness is borne by all who have gained experience in the spiritual life. In the famous *Imitation of Christ* it is said that comfort and sorrow thus alternate, and "this is nothing new nor strange unto them that have experience in the way of God; for the great saints and ancient prophets had oftentimes experience of such kind of vicissitudes. . . . If great saints were so dealt with, we that are weak and poor ought not to despair if we be sometimes hot and sometimes cold. . . . I never found any so religious and devout, that he had not sometimes a withdrawing of grace or felt not some decrease of zeal." (Bk. II. ix. 4, 5, 7.) This alternation of states being recognised as the result of a general law, a special manifestation of a universal principle, it becomes possible for us to utilise this knowledge both as a warning and an encouragement. We may be passing through a period of great spiritual illumination, when all seems to be easy of accomplishment, when the glow of devotion sheds its glory over life, and when the peace of sure insight is ours. Such a condition is often one of considerable danger, its very happiness lulling us into a careless security, and forcing into growth any remaining germs of the lower nature. At such moments the recalling of past periods of gloom is often useful, so that happiness may not become elation, nor enjoyment lead to attachment to pleasure; balancing the present joy by the memory

of past trouble and the calm prevision of trouble yet to come, we reach equilibrium and find a middle point of rest; we can then gain all the advantages that accrue from seizing a favourable opportunity for progress without risking a slip backwards from premature triumph. When the night comes down and all the life has ebbed away, when we find ourselves cold and indifferent, caring for nothing that had erst attracted us, then, knowing the law, we can quietly say: "This also will pass in its turn, light and life must come back, and the old love will again glow warmly forth." We refuse to be unduly depressed in the gloom, as we refused to be unduly elated in the light; we balance one experience against the other, removing the thorn of present pain by the memory of past joy and the foretaste of joy in the future; we learn in happiness to remember sorrow and in sorrow to remember happiness, till neither the one nor the other can shake the steady foothold of the soul. Thus we begin to rise above the lower stages of consciousness in which we are flung from one extreme to the other, and to gain the equilibrium which is called yoga. Thus the existence of the law becomes to us not a theory but a conviction, and we gradually learn something of the peace of the Self.

It may be well also for us to realise that the way in which we face and live through this trial of inner darkness and deadness is one of the surest tests of

spiritual evolution. "What worldly man is there that would not willingly receive spiritual joy and comfort if he could always have it? For spiritual comforts exceed all the delights of the world and the pleasures of the flesh. . . . But no man can always enjoy these divine comforts according to his desire; for the time of trial is never far away. . . . Are not all those to be called mercenary who are ever seeking consolations? . . . Where shall one be found who is willing to serve God for nought? Rarely is anyone found so spiritual as to have suffered the loss of all things." (Bk. II. x. 1; xi. 3, 4.) The subtle germs of selfishness persist far on into the life of discipleship, though they then ape in their growth the semblance of virtues, and hide the serpent of desire under the fair blossom of beneficence or of devotion. Few indeed are they who serve for nothing, who have eradicated the root of desire, and have not merely cut off the branches that spread above ground. Many a one who has tasted the subtle joys of spiritual experience finds therein his reward for the grosser delights he has renounced, and when the keen ordeal of spiritual darkness bars his way, and he has to enter into that darkness unbefriended and apparently alone, then he learns by the bitter and humiliating lesson of disillusion that he has been serving his ideal for wages and not for love. Well for us if we can be glad in the darkness as well as in the light, by the

sure faith in—though not yet by the vision of—that Flame which burns evermore within, THAT from the light of which we can never be separated, for it is in truth our very Self. Bankrupt in Time must we be ere ours is the wealth of the Eternal, and only when the living have abandoned us does the Vision of Life appear.

Another difficulty that sorely bewilders and distresses the aspirant is the unbidden presence of thoughts and desires that are incongruous with his life and aims. When he would fain contemplate the Holy, the presence of the unholy thrusts itself upon him; when he would see the radiant face of the Divine Man, the mask of the satyr leers at him in its stead. Whence these thronging forms of evil that crowd round him? whence these mutterings and whisperings as of devils in his ear? They fill him with shuddering repulsion, yet they seem to be his; can he really be the father of this foul swarm?

Once again an understanding of the cause at work may rob the effect of its sharp poison-tooth, and deliver us from the impotence due to ignorance. It is a commonplace of theosophical teaching that life embodies itself in forms, and that the life-energy which comes forth from that aspect of the Self which is knowledge moulds the matter of the mental plane into thought-forms. The vibrations that affect the mental body determine the materials that are

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built into its composition, and these materials are slowly changed in accordance with the changes in the vibrations sent forth. If the consciousness cease to work in a particular way, the materials which answered to those previous workings gradually lose their activity, finally becoming effete matter and being shaken out of the mental body. A considerable number of stages, however, intervene between the full activity of the matter constantly answering to mental impulses and its final deadness when ready for expulsion. Until the last stage is reached it is capable of being thrown into renewed activity by mental impulses either from within or from without, and long after the man has ceased to energise it, having outgrown the stage it represents, it may be thrown into active vibration, made to start up as a living thought, by a wholly external influence. For example: a man has succeeded in purifying his thoughts from sensuality, and his mind no longer generates impure ideas nor takes pleasure in contemplating impure images. The coarse matter, which in the mental and astral bodies vibrates under such impulses, is no longer being vivified by him, and the thought-forms erst created by him are dying or dead. But he meets some one in whom these things are active, and the vibrations sent out by him revivify the dying thought-forms, lending them a temporary and artificial life; they start up as the aspirant's own

thoughts, presenting themselves as the children of his mind, and he knows not that they are but corpses from his past, re-animated by the evil magic of impure propinquity. The very contrast they afford to his purified mind adds to the harassing torture of their presence, as though a dead body were fettered to a living man. But when he learns their true nature, they lose their power to torment. He can look at them calmly as remnants of his past, so that they cease to be poisoners of his present. He knows that the life in them is an alien one and is not drawn from him, and he can "wait with the patience of confidence for the hour when they shall affect" him "no longer."

Sometimes in the case of a person who is making rapid progress, this temporary revivification is caused deliberately by those who are seeking to retard evolution, those who set themselves against the Good Law. They may send a thought-force calculated to stir the dying ghosts into weird activity, with the set purpose of causing distress even when the aspirant has passed beyond the reach of temptation along these lines. Once again the difficulty ceases when the thoughts are known to draw their energy from outside and not from inside, when the man can calmly say to the surging crowd of impish tormentors: "You are not mine, you are no part of me, your life is not drawn from my thought. Ere long you will be dead beyond possibility of resurrec-

tion, and meanwhile you are but phantoms, shades that were once my foes."

Another fruitful source of trouble is the great magician Time, past-master of illusion. He imposes on us a sense of hurry, of unrest, by masking the oneness of our life with the veils of births and deaths. The aspirant cries out eagerly: "How much can I do, what progress can I make, during my present life?" There is no such thing as a "present life"; there is but one life—past and future, with the ever-changing moment that is their meeting-place; on one side of it we see the past, on the other side the future, and it is itself as invisible as the little piece of ground on which we stand. There is but one life, without beginning and without ending, the ageless, timeless life, and our arbitrary divisions of it by the ever-recurring incidents of births and deaths delude us and ensnare. These are some of the traps set for the Self by the lower nature, which would fain keep its hold on the winged Immortal that is straying through its miry paths. This bird of paradise is so fair a thing as its plumes begin to grow, that all the powers of nature fall to loving it, and set snares to hold it prisoner; and of all the snares the illusion of Time is the most subtle.

When a vision of truth has come late in a physical life, this discouragement as to time is apt to be most keenly felt. "I am too old to begin; if I had only known this in youth," is the cry. Yet

truly the path is one, as the life is one, and all the path must be trodden in the life; what matters it then whether one stage of the path be trodden or not during a particular part of a physical life? If A and B are both going to catch their first glimpse of the Reality two years hence, what matters it that A will then be seventy years of age while B will be a lad of twenty? A will return and begin anew his work on earth when B is ageing, and each will pass many times through the childhood, youth and old age of the body, while travelling along the higher stages of the path of life. The old man who "late in life," as we say, begins to learn the truths of the Ancient Wisdom, instead of lamenting over his age and saying: "How little can I do in the short time that remains to me," should say: "How good a foundation I can lay for my next incarnation, thanks to this learning of the truth." We are not slaves of Time, save as we bow to his imperious tyranny, and let him bind over our eyes his bandages of birth and death. We are always ourselves, and can pace steadfastly onwards through the changing lights and shadows cast by his magic lantern on the life he cannot age. Why are the Gods figured as ever-young, save to remind us that the true life lives untouched by Time? We borrow some of the strength and calm of Eternity when we try to live in it, escaping from the meshes of the great Enchanter.



Many another difficulty will stretch itself across the upward path as the aspirant essays to tread it, but a resolute will and a devoted heart, lighted by knowledge, will conquer all in the end and will reach the Supreme Goal. To rest on the Law is one of the secrets of peace, to trust it utterly at all times, not least when the gloom descends. No soul that aspires can ever fail to rise; no heart that loves can ever be abandoned. Difficulties exist only that in overcoming them we may grow strong, and they only who have suffered are able to save.

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# EYES AND EARS.

SIX CHATS ON SEEING & HEARING.

BY

ANNIE BESANT.



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# EYES AND EARS.

## I.—LIGHT AND COLOR.

Learned men for a long time disputed over the nature of light, and Sir Isaac Newton threw the weight of his great authority on the side of the Emission theory (*ex*, out; *mitto*, I send), a theory which regarded light as consisting of minute elastic particles, which were thrown off by a luminous body. This theory, ingenious as it was, failed to explain a large number of light phenomena, and Dr. Thomas Young, living about a century after Newton, put forth the undulatory theory (*unda*, a wave), which represents "light as a mode of motion, not of matter. A luminous body is conceived as a body which causes the ether to rise and fall in waves. The ether is a delicate medium, which is to us as yet weightless, impalpable. This medium is everywhere stretching through space. Just as water and air can be thrown into waves, so can this ether be thrown into waves; as ripples are caused by a stone striking on water, so are ripples caused by the vibrations of a luminous body striking on the ether, and these ripples of ether are what we call Light." <sup>1</sup>

This light travels at the rate of about 186,000 miles in a second, so could rush seven and a half times round the earth in the same brief space. To measure such a velocity does not seem to be a very easy task, but it has been done in several different ways. The first measurement was taken by a Danish astronomer, Rømer, in 1675. Rømer was engaged in noting the time occupied by one of Jupiter's moons revolving round the planet; he lost sight of the moon while it was traversing the part of its orbit which lay on the side of Jupiter remote from the earth, and was soon able to calculate accurately the moment of its reappearance. Six months afterwards Rømer was again looking for his moon, but it did not appear at the proper time. In these days we are accustomed to the unpunctuality of express trains, but we expect moons to keep proper time. Rømer was puzzling himself as to the fate of the vanished moon,

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<sup>1</sup> "Light, Heat, and Sound," by Annie Besant.

when, just fifteen minutes late, she slipped out from behind Jupiter as unconcernedly as possible. But why was she fifteen minutes late? Rømer was a man of genius, and the solution of the problem was swiftly grasped. When he had first observed Jupiter's moon, the earth was in the part of her orbit nearest to Jupiter. Six months later she had travelled away to the further side of her orbit, and the astronomer had been carried on the earth to a point of observation some 183 millions of miles more distant from Jupiter. The fifteen minutes were occupied by the light in travelling across the diameter of the earth's orbit, that is in traversing about 183 millions of miles. Since Rømer's time, the velocity of light has been calculated by means of ingenious instruments, and has been determined at about 186,000 miles per second.

The next very great discovery about light was made, and made accidentally, by Sir Isaac Newton. He took a prism to perform some experiment on it. Now a prism is a piece of some transparent substance shaped like a wedge. If a beam of light is sent through a prism it is bent out of its course. Take one of the triangular glass drops from a glass chandelier, and look at a candle through it; you will see the candle, but it will seem much displaced, and will appear to be either above or below its real position, according to the way in which you hold your improvised prism. The ray is bent in passing through the glass. Sir Isaac Newton was aware of this, and he made a small hole in a shutter to admit a beam of sunlight, and placed his prism in the beam, expecting to turn the beam, and to throw a white spot of light on the screen. To his astonishment the light which struck the prism as a level white beam, emerged from the prism as a fan which painted seven colors on the screen. White light, then, was not simple, but composite. But if this were so, then out of the seven colors white light might be built up. And so it proved to be. A lens placed in the path of the seven colors recombined them and made white light again fall on the screen. We do not need either prism or lens to prove that the seven elementary colors, as they are called, make white in combination; we can make a "Newton's disk" out of a piece of stout cardboard and some colored paper. Cut out a round flat piece of cardboard; cut seven wedge-shaped pieces of colored paper, broad at one end and tapering to a point, so that they quite cover the cardboard, with their points all meeting in the middle;

gum or paste them on the cardboard in the following order, so that they make a seven-colored surface, violet, dark-blue, light-blue, green, yellow, orange, red. Fasten the cardboard on a light wheel, so that you can make it revolve very rapidly on its own axis. The separate colors will be indistinguishable, and the disk will look white. It will be a dirty white, because the colors are sure not to be pure, but it will be enough to show that these seven colors make white.

The color of each of the seven rays which combine to make up the white light, depends upon what is called "wave-length." If you see several waves crossing a pool one behind another, and notice the distance from crest to crest of adjacent waves, you are noticing what is called a wave-length. Each of the seven colors has its own wave-length, and while the beam of white light is darting through space, each of its colored components has its own waves, quivering up and down in a line at right angles to the direction of the beam, and each of these seven sets of waves has its own wave-length. They are very minute, as you may imagine. The length of a wave of red light is  $\frac{1}{38918}$ th of an inch, while the violet are still tinier. We "see" when these tiny waves come dashing up against the inner coating of our eyes, just as waves break on an embankment when the tide is coming in. The color of the light we see depends upon the number of the blows upon the eye; I have said that the light is travelling at the rate of 186,000 miles per second, while each wave is vibrating up and down. Reduce the 186,000 miles to inches, and multiply the number thus obtained by the 38,918 waves of red which, set end to end, make up one inch, and you will find—if you don't lose your way among all the oughts—436 millions of millions (436,000,000,000,000) of waves strike the inner coating of our eyes when we see a ray of red light. Each wave delivers its own blow, and 436 millions of millions of these blows in one second give the perception of red. Very wonderful, and all true and capable of proof!

It will not be difficult now to understand why the world presents itself to our eyes radiant with all glorious colors. Different substances absorb different color-rays and reflect those they do not absorb. The color we see is the color of the rays which the substances reject. When a rose glows red in the sunlight it is greedily sucking in all the violet, blue, green, yellow and orange rays, and sends back only the red

to our eyes. When the green tendrils of the vine peep in at your window, they are taking into their own substance all the violet, blue, yellow, orange and red rays, and are pouring back into your eyes the green alone. In the rainbow the seven colors are all sent back separately to our eyes from the drops of water; each flower of a single hue sends us back but one, and keeps the rest. But whether in sky or on earth, whether gleaming from the rainbow or smiling from the blue-bell, all color that adds beauty to our lives and grace to our homes, is extracted by the wondrous alchemy of Nature from the beams that pour down in the dazzling whiteness from the glorious source of light.

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## II.—THE EYE AND ITS EVOLUTION.

Light and color would be of small use to us if we had not an organ capable of appreciating them. An organ, physiologically speaking, is a part of a body which is employed in the discharge of any particular function. In those lowest living beings named by Haeckel, the great German naturalist, *Protista*, because it is impossible to decide whether they are vegetable or animal forms, there are no organs. Any part of the creature can perform any function. They eat with any portion of the body, they breathe with the whole surface, there is no mouth, there are no lungs. But as we rise in the scale both of animal and vegetable life we find certain definite parts set aside for the discharge of certain definite functions, and these parts are "organs." Thus the lungs are the organs of respiration, the heart of circulation, etc. The functions are more perfectly discharged as the organs become more perfect; in the lower stages every part of the body is "Jack of all trades, and master of none;" in the highest, division of labor has led to the evolution of very complex organs, discharging very effectively their special functions.

Particularly complex in formation are the organs of the highest senses. Touch, distributed all over the body, has indeed its organ, the skin, but the skin does other work as well, and the sense of touch may be taken as the lowest of our senses, and the least specialised. Taste is a little higher in the scale, and smell a little higher yet; but when we come to the highest senses, sight and hearing, we find the most complex organism of the most exquisite delicacy.

The whole of the arrangement of the eye is not very



easily to be understood without a comprehension of the way in which a lens acts. A lens is a piece of any refracting substance, with either one or two curved opposite faces. A ray of light travels on in a straight line so long as it is passing through any one substance which is of the same density all through; but if the ray falls in a slanting direction, say on glass or water, after it has been passing through air, it will pass on through the glass or water, but will bend a little as it enters the denser substance. If you send a ray of light from a dark lantern on to a globe half full of water, and send a puff of tobacco smoke across the path of the beam through the air, you will see the ray alter its direction when it passes into the water. This is called the *refraction of light* (*refractus*, broken). A lens, being denser than air, refracts rays of light that pass through it, and it refracts them in such a manner that it brings them all together into a point, which is called the *focus* of the lens. By this means a lens forms an image, or picture, of an object. If you take a candle and put it near a white screen or a white piece of card, and then put between the candle and the screen a little plain bottle with rounded sides—a common glass oil-flask does capitally—and fill the bottle with water, you will get a very distinct image of the candle on the screen, and it will be upside down. If it is not clear at first, move the candle and the bottle nearer and further from the screen, until you hit the right distance; the candle will then be “in focus,” and the image will be clear and distinct. If you take another bottle, with more or less rounded sides, you will have to move your candle before you can get a clear image, and any change of roundness, convexity, in the bottle will require a change of position in the candle, if the image is to be clear and bright.

Some of my readers may be wondering what on earth all this talk about water-bottles and candles has to do with eyes. Just this, readers mine: you have several lenses in your eyes, and they act somewhat in the fashion of our water-bottles. And now, if you are wise, you will get some bullock's eyes from the butcher, and find out in them all the parts I am going to describe, and I shall take the liberty of describing the eye just as though all my readers were wise, and had an eye in their hands as well as two in their heads. The eye is almost a sphere in shape, and has a strong firm outside coating, called the *sclerotic*. This is the protective

coat, and is thick as well as strong. It is pierced at the back by a thick white cord which is the *optic nerve*, and which runs to the *corpora quadrigemina*, or optic lobes of the brain. The sclerotic is opaque, except in a portion of the front where it bulges out, and makes the first lens of the eye, the *cornea*; this transparent cornea has some liquid behind it, the *aqueous humor*, as you can easily find out by pricking it. Cutting through the sclerotic, we come on to the second coat of the eye, the *choroid*, a dark very delicate lining which serves to absorb superfluous light; you see how it is all plaited and folded round the front, and makes a circle of folds round a delicate colored ring, the *iris*, which has a hole in the middle, the *pupil*. The iris is the part which we speak of when we say a person's eyes are brown or blue. This iris contracts and expands, making the pupil larger or smaller, and so regulating the amount of light which passes inside the eye. Notice how a cat's pupil contracts into a mere line in the sunshine, and expands in the twilight; our pupils contract and expand with changes of light, but not to such an extent as do those of the cat. Just behind the iris you see a round transparent body; that is the *crystalline lens*, and beyond this is a watery jelly-like fluid, the *vitreous humor*, enclosed in the *hyaline membrane*, forming a third lens. One other coat of the eye remains; when the optic nerve, after piercing the sclerotic passes also through the choroid, it spreads out into numberless delicate nerve-fibres, and makes part of a third coat, the *retina*, and in addition to these fibres there are other important bodies called *rods* and *cones*, as well as delicate blood-vessels. This retina is the "sensitive plate" of the eye, and receives all the images. There is one very odd thing about it; the "blind spot" of the eye is just where the optic nerve enters; at this point there is no vision.

Now, suppose that rays from a candle fall on your eye; they strike the cornea and pass through it and the aqueous humor and are refracted a little; they go through the pupil, through the crystalline lens, and are refracted again; through the vitreous humor and its hyaline membrane, and are refracted a third time, and they fall on the retina and make an image there of the candle. These three lenses work together to form this image; they make a much better one than our poor clumsy solitary oil-flask, but the principle is the same.

The sharp reader will see a difficulty; the lens only gave a clear image of the candle when it was at a certain distance

from it; we see clearly at many distances; therefore, clear images must be formed at many distances. But, dear sharp reader, you obtained clear images at different distances when you *changed your bottles*. Now, changing the crystalline lens every time that we wanted to look up from reading to smile at a face on the other side of the table would be very awkward; but we gain the same object by changing the curvature of the lens. Some minute muscles, called the *ciliary muscles*, cause the curve of the lens to change, when we want to see objects at different distances; the nearer the object the more convex must the lens be, and this change is called the adjustment of the eye. Try carefully, and you will be conscious of a movement in the eye as you look at a thing close by and then at one far off in the same straight line. You do not move the eyeball, but you feel a movement within it: that movement is the movement of the muscles, changing the convexity of the lens. A short-sighted person has the lens too much curved always, and concave spectacles are used to correct the too convex lens. A long-sighted person has the lens too much flattened, and convex spectacles are necessary.

I can only deal briefly with the evolution of the eye, but must say just enough to show how gradually this complex organ has been formed. "Nature makes no leaps," and an organ as complicated as the eye has a long history behind it. Come with me very low down in the animal world, and look at the first hints nature gives of an eye. The first definite eye-spot that we yet know of is a little colored speck at the base of the tentacles of some of the *Hydromedusæ*, jelly-fish in common parlance. They are only spots of pigment, and we should not know they were attempts at eyes were it not that some relations, the *Discophora*, have little refractive bodies in their pigment-spots, and these refractive bodies resemble the crystalline cones of animals a little higher in scale. In the next class (*Vermes*), including all worms, we find only pigment spots in the lowest; then pigment spots with a nerve fibre ending in them; pigment spots with rod-shaped cells, with crystalline rods; pigment spots with crystalline cones. Next, the cones begin to be arranged radially; and in the *Alciopidæ* the eye has become a sphere with a lens and a vitreous body, layer of pigment, layer of rods, and optic nerve. To mark the evolution definitely in another way, we find the more highly-developed eye of the adult appearing as a pigment spot in the embryo, so that

both the evolution of the race and the evolution of the individual tell the same story. In the Echinoderma (sea urchins, star-fishes) we find only pigment spots in the lower forms, but in the higher the rod-shaped cells, the transparent cones projecting from pigment cells. In the Arthropoda (lobsters, insects, etc.), the advance continues from the Vermes. The retina is formed more definitely than in the Alciopidæ, and the eye becomes more complex. The compound eye is an attempt at grouping many cones together, and is found in the higher members of this sub-kingdom. In the lowest vertebrate, the amphioxus, the eye is a mere pigment spot, but in the others the more complex forms are taken up and carried on to the comparative perfection of the mammalian eye. This slow evolution explains the imperfections of the highest forms of eye now existing, and judging from the improvements made since the first pigment spot and the first lens, it is reasonable to suppose that the eye is still journeying towards a higher and more perfect condition.

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### III.—OPTICAL PHENOMENA AND INSTRUMENTS.

Light, instead of being transmitted through an object and refracted, as by a lens, may be reflected, as by a mirror. In this case also we obtain an image, but in the mirrors in every-day use the image is a *virtual*, not a *real* one. A real image is an image through which the rays of light actually pass; a virtual image is one through which the rays do not pass; when you see yourself in a looking-glass no rays have passed through the mirror; they have fallen upon its surface and have been reflected (*reflecto*, I bend back).

One of the three "fates" which have now been mentioned befalls all rays of light that reach our earth. The light is absorbed, transmitted, or reflected. The understanding of these makes explicable (a) the various natural phenomena around us, and (b) the mechanism of the artificial methods of widening our vision.

(a) *Natural phenomena.* What is the cause of the rainbow? We have already seen that a sunbeam is composite, not simple. Such a beam falls on a raindrop and is refracted. "It is in part reflected at the back of the drop, and on emerging it is again refracted. By these two refractions, at its entrance and at its emergence, the beam of light is decomposed, quitting the drop resolved into colored con-

stituents. The light thus reaches the eye of an observer facing the drop, and with his back to the sun" (Tyndall). Each raindrop is, in fact, a tiny prism, dispersing the seven-fold unity of white light. Wherever are playing scattered drops of water in the sunlight there may the rainbow be seen, *provided that the eye of the observer is in a certain definite position in relation to the drops.* Very perfect rainbows may often be seen spanning waterfalls. One of the loveliest rainbows I ever saw arched over a waterfall in Switzerland, the Staubbach. When gorgeous shades of color deck the sky on the rising and the setting of the sun, the atmosphere is acting as a prism, dispersing the white level sunbeams, and the clouds reflect the colors separately to our eyes. When the sun glows red through the fog or the mist of morn or even, the atmosphere has absorbed all its rays save the red, and these alone are transmitted to us. When a yellow fog covers the landscape, the atmosphere has stolen from the sunbeams all the rays, save the yellow, and only these struggle through to dimly light the earth. When the waves breaking on the beach toss the white foam high in the air, the foam is but the water-bubbles reflecting back and scattering the white light. When bending over the side of a steamer you see the foam made by the paddles gleam greenly from beneath the surface, some portions of the white rays scattered by the foam have been absorbed as they passed through the water, and the greenish rays have escaped to your eyes. When you gaze down into the deep water and mark its blackness, and spite of the blackness, you draw up a glassful clear and translucent, the apparent contradiction is explained when you remember that the most transparent bodies absorb *some* of the light rays, and that, consequently, although a small portion, absorbing little, looks transparent, a vast depth absorbs all, and looks black, 'because no rays come back from it to your eyes.

(b) *Artificial methods of widening our vision.* The use of spectacles is, unfortunately, too widely spread for forgetfulness thereof. Eyes, whether imperfectly formed from birth, or worn out before their time by overwork, need the skilful aid of the optician to remedy their defects. A glance back at the last section will remind the reader of the *rationale* of spectacles.

To increase the normal range of vision so that it shall include the numberless forms of living things too minute to

be seen by the eyes bestowed upon us by Mother Nature, is the office of the microscope. Without diagrams the exact action cannot be shown, and it must suffice to say that if you put an object under a lens at a certain definite distance from it, a much enlarged image of the object is formed on the same side of the lens, and this image is seen by an eye on the other side. The lens is between the eye and the object, and such a lens forms the simple microscope. The compound microscope has two lenses, and the first lens forms an image which is magnified by the second; the magnified image formed by the second lens is what we see, and this double magnification gives its great power to the compound microscope. The telescope enlarges our vision by bringing within its range the far-off worlds that circle through space, as well as distant objects on our own globe. Its action is similar to that of the compound microscope, except that for terrestrial telescopes a third lens is added, because objects are turned upside down by the microscope and by the celestial telescope (wherein the same arrangement of lenses is made), and it would be particularly awkward if you turned your telescope to watch for a friend's return to see him come walking along upside down. To prevent such a trying occurrence a third lens is added, which turns him right side up again after he has been reversed by the first lens, and magnified by the second. The opera-glass, sometimes called the Galilean telescope, has only two lenses, but one of them is a concave one, and this performs the same good office as the third lens of the terrestrial telescopes, namely, restores objects to their proper positions. The three lenses of the terrestrial telescope require rather a long tube, hence the convenient opera-glass is often preferred.

In the stereoscope two different pictures are made of the same object, one as it appears to the right eye, the second as it appears to the left. These pictures are placed in a box, with a partition down the middle. A half lens is placed above each picture, and the rays from the pictures falling on these are refracted, and form a single picture in the middle. The kaleidoscope has two mirrors inclined towards each other, generally at an angle of  $60^\circ$ ; when mirrors are thus arranged and an object is placed between them five images are made thereof; the objects used in the kaleidoscope are little bits of colored glass, and as each bit is reflected five times over, patterns are formed; one little triangular piece of red glass, for instance, will be

reflected five times, and the piece and its five images will make a pretty six-rayed star.

A camera-obscura is a box into one side of which a lens is fitted. An inclined mirror is placed within the box to receive images of things outside, the rays passing in through a second opening; this mirror reflects the rays through the lens on to a screen below.

Before closing these "eyes" there are two other interesting points which I desire to add to this brief sketch of optical facts.

"The persistence of impressions on the retina gives rise to many well-known phenomena. An impression made on the retina lasts for one-tenth of a second, and if a second similar impression be made before this time has expired, the eye will be conscious of no interruption, and the sensation will be continuous; hence a lighted stick whirled rapidly round makes a continuous circle of fire, and not a succession of bright points. The ends of the nerves, however, are readily wearied, and if one impression has been continued over-long they become for a brief space unresponsive to that particular impression. Thus if we gaze steadily at a red object and then look at a white screen, the nerves which respond to the red are wearied, and the complementary color, bluish-green, is perceived on the screen. We know that two complementary colors make up white light; if the eye can no longer receive the impression of one of these, then the white light falling on it can only give the impression of the other. The well-known advertisement of 'Pears' soap' utilises this simple fact to attract and puzzle passers-by. The words are printed in red, and the nerve-ends become fatigued so far as this color is concerned; if we now gaze at the white space below, the white light reflected from it falls on the nerves; they have become unresponsive to the red rays, and as the remaining rays make up a bluish-green, this is seen in lieu of the red print.

"Color-blindness results from a defect in the retina, some of the nerve ends which respond to certain colors being either wanting or injured. Hence the curious fact that a color-blind person may look at a cherry-tree loaded with scarlet fruit, and may only see green. The point is important practically, for if a railway driver or railway guard be color-blind the red light of danger shines out as the green light of safety, and a terrible accident may result, not from carelessness, but from inevitable want of perception. Mr.

Huxley thinks that color-blindness may arise 'from some unusual absorptive power of the humors of the eye which prevents particular rays from reaching the retina; or the fault may lie in the brain itself.'

"Dr. Young considered, and his view is now generally accepted, that there are but three 'elementary color sensations,' and that all colors known to us are the result of varying combinations of these three primary physiological perceptions. Helmholtz refers each of these three sensations to a distinct set of nerves, one of which responds to the vibrations of green, the second to the vibrations of red, the third to those of violet. All other colors would be sensated by interaction of these three primary nerve-sets."

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#### IV.—SOUND.

"Sound, like light, is the result of waves striking against an organ adapted for their reception. A sounding, or, as it is sometimes called, a sonorous body, is a body which vibrates and throws into waves the air surrounding it. The luminous body throws the impalpable ether into waves. The sonorous body throws the air into waves. We can prove that the sonorous body is a vibrating body, and we can prove the air is the medium by the agitation of which we become conscious of sound. To prove that a sonorous body is a vibrating body fill with water an ordinary glass bowl, such a bowl as is used for keeping gold-fish in; take a common violin bow, and draw the bow sharply across the edge; a note will be heard, and the surface of the water will become covered with ripples; the ripples are caused by the vibrations of the glass. Or, suspend a little ball of pith or cork by a thread, so that it just touches the edge of the glass. When the note sounds the ball will be thrown off, and will be repelled each time it swings back against the sounding glass. Another way is by folding little bits of paper and hanging them across a wire; bow the wire, and the slips will jump into the air as the note rings out. Or take a glass disc fixed in the middle, and scatter sand over its surface; then bow the edge, and the sand will begin to dance, and will arrange itself into definite lines and curves." If you touch the disc at different points and keep your finger on it while you bow the edge, you will find that the arrangement of the lines differs according to the points you touch; the reason for this is that by touching, or, as it



is called, "damping" the disc you stop the vibrations at the particular point that you touch, and so interfere with the direction of the waves; your finger acts like the rock that juts out from the bed of the stream; the waves circle round it and break up against its side, forming little eddies and currents. If you change the note you make with the bow, you change also the direction of the lines of sand.

"To prove that the air is the medium the agitation of which causes sound, place an electric bell under the receiver of an air pump, and set it ringing. Begin to exhaust the receiver, and as the air becomes rarer and rarer the sound will grow fainter and fainter; let the air in again, and the sound will ring out as clearly as at first."

Sound travels more swiftly and more perfectly in a solid than in a gas: if you place your ear at one end of a beam of wood or a bar of iron, you will be able to hear a tap that would be inaudible at the same distance if you removed your ear from the beam. The doctor's stethoscope is a utilisation of this fact. The velocity with which sound is transmitted through iron is about fifteen times as great as that with which it is transmitted through air, so that if you stand at one end of a very long bar of iron and get a friend to give a knock with a hammer at the other end you will hear two blows, one vibration being transmitted along the iron and the second through the air. The velocity of sound in water was measured in the Lake of Geneva across a distance of between eight and nine miles. A bell was struck under water by a hammer which at the same time caused some gunpowder to explode. The flash of the powder was seen, and the time was noted which elapsed between seeing the flash and hearing the stroke of the bell transmitted through water. The sound was found to travel 1,435 metres per second (a metre is a little more than  $3\frac{1}{4}$  feet). Through the air at  $0^{\circ}$  C. it travels 1,090 feet (about 322 metres) per second, and the velocity increases as the temperature rises.

A distinction is drawn between sounds which are merely noises and sounds which are musical notes. A noise is made by a number of waves of sound which fall tumultuously and in disorder on the ear; a musical note is made up of regular periodical vibrations; the pitch of the note depends on the number of vibrations which are made in a second, just as color depends on the number of vibrations of the particles of ether. Each note in the musical scale has its

own number of vibrations; the lowest note we can hear consists of only sixteen vibrations in the second, the shrillest of 38,000. Different persons have different capacities for hearing; some cannot hear the acute cry of the bat, while it is plainly audible to others; the chirp of the cicada is unheard by one man, while his companion can hear it plainly. The number of vibrations in any given note is found by a machine invented by Savart. It has a wheel which can be turned rapidly, and which turns a second toothed wheel. The teeth just touch a card, and a dial marks the number of revolutions made by the toothed wheel. The machine is set going and its speed increased until the teeth strike against the card with sufficient rapidity to yield a musical note. The note which is under examination is then sounded, and the speed of the machine increased until the note given by the machine is identical with the one sounded. This achieved, the machine is worked for a second at the rate which gives the required note, and the number of revolutions is marked on a dial. The number of revolutions of the wheel, multiplied by the number of teeth it carries, gives the number of blows, and therefore of vibrations, which make the note. When a note is an octave higher than another it consists of twice as many vibrations; in a musical scale a certain definite ratio must be kept, the vibration frequency of each note bearing a fixed proportion to the key-note. The key-note may have any number of vibrations, that is, may be of any pitch; but taking that number as one, the succeeding notes must be to it as nine-eighths, five-fourths, four-thirds, three-halves, five-thirds, fifteen-eighths, 2 being the octave.

Since sound, like light, is caused by the action of waves, it is not surprising that it can be reflected. If two conjugate mirrors are used, a watch placed in the focus of one can be heard ticking in the focus of the other. An "echo" is caused by the reflexion of sound. The waves caused by the vibration of a sonorous body strike against a wall or a rock, or any projecting surface, and are turned back and heard as though they issued from the reflecting surface. "In a mountainous district the sound-waves reflected from one crag strike against another and are again reflected, and so from crag to crag, and they also strike against various crags in their original passage, the result being a many times repeated echo, growing fainter and fainter with each reflexion, and so appearing to be a sound dying away in the far

distance." The number of syllables repeated by an echo depends upon the distance of the reflecting surface from the speaker. The surface must be distant about 100 feet (temperature average) to send back a word of one syllable.

Sound can not only be reflected, but it can be refracted. A round balloon filled with carbonic-acid gas makes a capital sound lens, bringing the sound rays to a focus, just as a glass lens brings rays of light. As with the conjugate mirror, a watch offers a very good source of sound; if this be hung at a distance from the lens, the converging sound-rays passing through the principal focus are there audible.

Many of my readers may have noticed, when standing on a railway platform, that, as an express train rushes past whistling, the whistle sounds shriller as the train approaches, and less shrill as it recedes. We have already seen that an increase of the number of vibrations makes notes shriller; as the train approaches more vibrations are crowded into the ear, as it retreats the number lessens, the increase and decrease depending on the velocity with which the train is moving.

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#### V.—THE EAR AND ITS EVOLUTION.

In the ear, as in the eye, we have a part of the body specialised for the discharge of a particular function, and we have again an organ which has been slowly and gradually evolved. The more complex the organ the more lengthy its evolutionary history; when we see a wonderfully complicated and intricately adapted organ, we know at once that it has not been formed suddenly, but that it first appeared in a very simple form, and slowly developed, adding one improvement here and one there, until it at last reached the highest stage known to us. The earnest student may naturally ask: Why should this development take place? The answer is not far to seek. Look around and see how all living things prey on each other, and how even in the vegetable world plant struggles with plant for soil and light and moisture: the gardener weeds out the useless plants lest they should choke out those he desires to grow. This universal fight for food and life has been aptly named the Struggle for Existence. Next: animals and plants vary; every farmer, every gardener, can bear witness that in his animals and plants of the same species varieties occur. Some of these varieties are useful, others are harmful to the animal or plant in its

struggle for existence. If the variety be injurious the animal is at a disadvantage in the contest with its fellows, and it is trampled out and its mischievous variety dies with it. But if it varies in a direction which is useful to it, it gains an advantage over its fellows in the struggle, it survives, it breeds, and hands on to its young its own peculiarities. They start with an advantage, increase it, and so on. Thus, to take the sense of hearing in a rudimentary stage: the animal who had a little keener sense of hearing than its fellows would have a better chance of flying from an approaching enemy and so of avoiding capture and death. This is a very bald and very rough way of stating a great natural truth, but my limited space forbids a fuller explanation.

I shall first deal with the ear in its highest stage, taking the human ear as example and then trace it from the lowest form known to us.

"The ear has three divisions, external, middle, and internal. The external ear includes the visible ear or *pinna*, and the auditory canal as far as the drum, or *membrana tympani*, a membrane which stretches across the canal and completely closes it. The pinna consists chiefly of cartilage, and serves to collect the waves of sound and to direct them into the auditory canal; all the waves which come surging up against the pinna are turned into this canal, and the little prominences and depressions which we see on the surface of the ear all serve this purpose. The canal is about an inch and a quarter in length, and in its walls are many glands which secrete wax and pour it into the canal. A certain amount of this wax is useful, but it is sometimes too largely secreted and then causes deafness, for the sound-waves striking against it are checked and are not transmitted into the middle and internal ear." The membrane which closes the inner end of the canal vibrates very readily; hence the agony caused by any insect which creeps into the ear. If it flutters against this membrane it sets up vibrations which are almost intolerable: if such an accident occurs, do not try to get the intruder out with anything hard, but pour into the ear a little oil; this will drown him and stop the mischief, and if he does not float out with the oil, syringe the ear. No hard body should ever be pushed into the ear, for if it enters far enough to touch this delicate membrane it may puncture it, and the mischief is irremediable. The middle ear, sometimes called the *tympanum*,

is a cavity on the inner side of the membrane; it contains three little bones, or *ossicles*, named the *malleus*, *incus*, and *stapes* from their shapes (hammer, anvil, and stirrup). The handle of the "hammer" rests against the *membrana tympani*, while its head lies on the "anvil;" and the "anvil" touches the "stirrup," and the "stirrup" is fastened to the margin of a little oval opening, and closes the aperture. "Now imagine a wave of sound striking the pinna; it will be directed down the external canal and will strike on the *membrana tympani*; the membrane will be set vibrating; the vibrations will be transmitted to the 'hammer,' by this to the 'anvil,' by the latter to the 'stirrup,' and the stirrup will be quivering against the oval opening (*fenestra ovalis*, oval window). This *fenestra* opens into the internal ear, or labyrinth, the cavity of which is lined with a membrane and contains a fluid (lymph) and two tiny rounded chalk bodies named otoliths. This internal ear is very complicated in structure, consisting of a cavity named the *vestibule*, *three semi-circular canals* which open from the vestibule, curve round and open into it again, and the *cochlea*, so-named from its resemblance to a snail-shell, and containing an axis in the centre round which winds spirally a delicate flat layer, extending from the axis to the sides of the cochlea, like a spiral staircase inside a column. Minute sub-divisions of the auditory nerve are spread over all these parts, as well as over the membranous lining of the internal ear, and they act just as the strings of a harp or lyre, vibrating under the waves of sound." We have traced the vibrations as far as the *fenestra ovalis*; they here set the lymph in motion; and the waves of lymph strike on the ends of the auditory nerve, which communicates with the brain, and we hear.

I have said above that there is no entrance into the inner parts of the ear from the external auditory canal, but that a membrane entirely closes the end; there is, however, a communication between the exterior and the middle ear by way of the mouth. A canal about two inches long, named the Eustachian tube, opens into the tympanum at one end and into the top of the throat at the other. The canal is generally closed, but is opened by the action of swallowing. Its chief use appears to be to equalise the pressure on either side of the *membrana tympani*. The tympanum contains air, which presses the membrane outwards; the outside air presses it inwards, and when the pressure is equal on the

two sides the membrane remains in its normal position. But if this pressure is not equal on either side pain is felt; on a very cold day, for instance, pain is often felt in the ears, because the cold has made the air contract and has thereby disturbed the equilibrium, and caused pressure on the membrane. If under these circumstances you make the motion of swallowing two or three times, the pain will cease, because by swallowing you have opened the Eustachian tube, have thereby put the middle ear in communication with the outside, and have re-established equilibrium of pressure from the air outside the membrane and that inside it. The pain felt in the ear while ascending a high mountain may be relieved in the same way.

I turn now to the evolution of the ear, and we shall find its earliest appearance in our former acquaintances, the jelly-fishes. Round the edge of the "umbrella" (the jelly-like expansion) of the free-swimming Medusæ are some little capsules called marginal vesicles, which enclose one or more minute crystals; these marginal vesicles are in close connexion with the nerve-ring, some filaments from it passing to the capsules. This earliest ear is a closed sac with otoliths, but there is none of the complicated structure that we have seen associated with these in the highly developed ear of man. In the Vermes the ear of the lower forms is very much like that just described, the capsule containing sometimes one large otolith and sometimes several small ones; the capsule is often furnished with cilia, delicate hair-like projections in ceaseless movement, and they cause constant quivering in the fluid within the capsule; the higher worms have these capsules paired, and on either side of the nervous mass which represents the brain. It is curious that both in the Vermes and in the Medusæ, the animals which have auditory capsules, or vesicles, have generally no eye-spots, while those which have developed eye-spots have generally no auditory apparatus. Mother Nature's "prentice hand" seems to have been too unskilled to manage at once the double differentiation. Some of the Echinoderma have auditory vesicles, but none have them highly developed, and they are also, so far as we know, wanting in the Myriapoda and Arachnida (centipedes and spiders). The lobster and its allies have ears at the base of the inner antennæ, and these consist of a folding in of the skin, so forming a sac, sometimes open, sometimes closed. Otoliths are found in both kinds of sac;

in the open ones they are formed of grains of sand driven in and sticking to the delicate hairs projecting from the inner wall. Some of the insects have a much more highly developed ear, for they have not only the essential auditory vesicle, but now we find a tympanic membrane stretched between the vesicle and the exterior; in these ears the nerve-endings are symmetrically arranged. The oddest thing about insects is that their ears turn up at all kinds of queer parts of their bodies. For instance, the locust carries his ears in his front legs. Now, just fancy listening with your leg!

Some of the Mollusca (soft-bodied animals) have very poor ears, those of the octopus and cuttlefish being the best. In the vertebrates the lowest fishes have a very poorly developed ear, but an advance is seen over that of the insects, for one semicircular canal is developed, and in the next higher two such canals are formed, and in the next three. The sac, which may now be regarded as the vestibule, contains otoliths, and a little extension is given off, which in higher races becomes a cochlea. In the Amphibia (frogs, toads, etc.) the vestibule and canals appear, and the extension or *diverticulum*, is larger and more developed. The *membrana tympani* may easily be seen in a frog, as a little round spot, level with the skin. In the reptiles and the birds, the *diverticulum* is still more developed, and the end of it is a little turned up, but not rolled as in the higher orders. In the lowest order of mammals the *diverticulum* is only bent, but in the others, although it is only bent at first, it becomes rolled upon itself later, and so forms the cochlea. Most of the reptiles, and all birds have a middle ear and a true tympanic membrane; the three ossicles are not found except in the mammalia, the lower classes having a single ossicle, representing the "stirrup." The lowest order of mammals also has only this one of the little bones of the middle ear. Some hints of the external ear with its pinna are given in the crocodile and the owl, but there is no real external ear until we have passed beyond the lowest mammalian order; in the aquatic mammals there is little trace of the external ear.

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## VI.—SOUND INSTRUMENTS AND SOUND PHENOMENA.

Man in sound, as in light, has widely enlarged the limits of the sense bestowed upon him by Mother Nature, and has utilised the facts he has discovered for his own benefit and pleasure. By speaking and hearing trumpets he converses with his fellows when, without artificial aid, audible speech would be impossible. A "speaking trumpet" is a long tapering tube, with a mouthpiece at one end, and a bell-shaped enlargement at the other. An ear trumpet has also a 'bell,' which in this case serves to collect the waves of sound and to reflect them down the tube, the other end of which is small in order that it may be placed conveniently in the ear: very often a delicate membrane is placed across the inside of the tube, and this adds largely to the value of the trumpet."

In all stringed instruments, such as the piano, the violin, the harp, the notes are made by the vibration of the strings, a certain definite number of vibrations yielding a certain note; thus the middle C is sounded whenever the string makes 256 vibrations in a second; the number is a little higher or lower according to the particular pitch adopted, the Paris and English C being lower than the C of "concert pitch." It has already been stated that all the notes have their own number of vibrations, and that these numbers in a scale always bear a certain definite ratio to the number of vibrations of the key-note. Now the number of vibrations made by a string in a second depends upon four things—its length, thickness, tension, and density. The longer the string, the fewer vibrations it makes in a second; the greater the thickness the fewer vibrations; but the tighter and the less dense the string, the more vibrations it makes in a second. You see a violin player, when a note sounds "flat" turn one of the little pegs at the top of his instrument; he is tightening the string and thus is increasing the tension and making it vibrate more rapidly; he shortens a string and makes it vibrate more rapidly and so yields a higher note, by pressing his finger on the string and in this way shortening the vibrating portion which is between his finger and the bridge; the bass string is thicker and heavier than the treble, and therefore vibrates more slowly, the bass notes being composed of a much smaller number of vibrations than the treble ones. In the piano the strings are made to vibrate by blows from hammers, instead of being pulled



aside by a bow. The strings which give the bass notes are loaded with wire which is twisted round them, and so are caused to vibrate more slowly. In the guitar and the harp the strings are plucked with the fingers, but although various ways may be employed in order to set the strings in motion, the cause of the music is always one and the same, the vibrations of strings in accordance with the laws above stated. In organ pipes, and other wind instruments, the source of the sound is a vibrating column of air, instead of a vibrating string. Air is driven through the lower part of the pipes, either by the action of bellows or by the mouth, and escapes through a slit, the waves striking against a wedge, and one of the notes made by these waves sets the column of air within the pipe vibrating and "the pipe speaks." The note thus given depends on the length of the pipe; if you look at an organ you will see that the pipes are of different lengths. Pipes are sometimes open at both ends, and sometimes closed at one end; a closed pipe gives a note an octave lower than an open pipe of the same length, but the explanation of this fact would lead me a little beyond the scope of these papers.

"If you take a tuning-fork and sound it, holding it in the air in your hand, the note given is very feeble, but if you place it on a table or any hard body, the note rings out clearly. We have seen that a note is made by vibrations; the tuning-fork vibrates and gives a note, but the vibrations are small and the note feeble; when the fork is placed in communication with a large hard body, it communicates its vibrations to the large surface, and the note is re-inforced and sounds clearly. If a long deal rod be placed on the sound-board of a piano, and a flat body capable of vibration be pressed against its remote end, the rod, vibrating with the sound-board of the piano, will communicate the vibrations to the flat body, and the latter will reproduce all the notes struck on the piano. A piano played on the ground floor of a house may thus be rendered clearly audible in the garret, although the doors between be shut. Curious effects may thus be produced, for the end of the vibrating rod is not sufficient to cause vibrations powerful enough to give a note, but if you place a tray against it the melody played on the piano below rings through the garret; and you have apparently a musical tray. Advantage has been taken of this fact in many spiritualistic *séances*, and ignorant people have been deceived by the production of 'music by spirit

fingers,' which has really been caused by the very simple plan of a confederate playing in a room removed from that in which sit the performer and his dupes, the tune being made audible when wanted by placing against the vibrating rod a tray, banjo, cymbal, or whatever instrument is selected."

"The phonograph, invented by Edison, has a funnel into which the voice of the speaker is directed; within this is a membrane, which vibrates as the waves of sound strike upon it, and this vibrating membrane carries a pointed instrument, which makes little dents on a sheet of tin-foil, made to revolve against its point. This sheet may be sent to the other side of the world just as it is. If it be fixed so as to revolve against a similar pointed instrument each dint makes the style, as it is called, vibrate, the vibrations are communicated to the membrane, the membrane sets the air vibrating, and these vibrations being identical with those which originally caused the indentations in the tin-foil, the same words are given out as were spoken in. Tunes have thus been reproduced, as well as spoken words, and the voices of different people can be distinguished the one from the other." Thus a mother left in England may hear the very tones of the son who has left her to dwell at the Antipodes, and thus science comes to brighten life, and to soften the pain of separation between those who love.

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# AN INTRODUCTION TO THEOSOPHY

BY

ANNIE BESANT.

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# An Introduction to Theosophy.

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## I.

### THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

**T**HE Theosophical Society was founded in New York City in the year 1875, the day recognized as its official birthday being November 17th. Regarded as a spiritual movement inaugurated in the first year of the closing quarter of the nineteenth century for the helping of men, it has for its true Founders certain great spiritual Teachers, who devised this means of reawakening the East and awakening the West to the knowledge of the springs of spiritual truth that lay hidden in Eastern philosophy; the spread of materialism in the West, and its consequent spread in the East, was threatening the very existence of spiritual life among men; the triumphs of Western

Science, so dazzling in their effects on material comfort and luxury as well as in their intellectual promise, were alluring the most promising of the youth of every land towards a philosophy becoming more and more materialistic, while the minds whose bent was more religious than intellectual were slipping further and further into superstition; already the cry was being raised that between Rome and Atheism there was no sure and defensible standing-ground, and that the battle of the near future was between a Religion devoid of all Science and a Science devoid of all Religion. It was at this crisis that the great guardians of spiritual truth stepped forward, and sent into the arena a new combatant, the Esoteric Philosophy. As a centre for those who held this philosophy, round whom might gather others who—agreed or not on philosophy—were willing to coöperate for the spreading of love and true brotherhood among men, They instigated the founding of the Theosophical Society.

Regarded as an organized Society, existing in the world, with definite objects, rules, and organization, it had for its founders Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, a chelâ (disciple) of the spiritual Teachers above spoken of, and Colonel Henry Steele Olcott, whom she brought into contact with these same Teachers; with these two was associated William Q. Judge, a young lawyer, whom she names in one of her letters as regarded by

her as being co-founder of the Society with herself and Colonel Olcott. Of these three Helena P. Blavatsky was a Russian of noble birth, descended on the father's side from the branch of the von Hahns settled in Russia, and on the mother's from the Fadeeffs and the Dolgoroukis, she being the granddaughter of the Princess Helene Dolgorouki of the elder branch, and the daughter of Helene Fadeeff. These facts have been certified to by her uncle, Major-General Fadeeff, of the Tzar's staff, and Joint Secretary of State in the Russian Ministry of the Interior. She was the widow of a Councillor of State, General Nicephore Blavatsky late Vice-Governor of the Province of Erivan, Caucasus. Renouncing rank and wealth, she had travelled in all lands, searching for occult knowledge, and had finally passed under the tuition of a great Eastern Adept, to the carrying out of whose directions in the service of man the whole of her later life was devoted. She passed from this life on May 8th, 1891, at 19 Avenue Road, Regent's Park, London. During the period from 1875 to 1891 she was the heart and soul of the Society, the chief link between it and the Teachers of the Esoteric Philosophy; she held but a nominal office, her work being that of a teacher, not of an organizer, and her books—*Isis Unveiled*, *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Key to Theosophy*, *The Voice of the Silence*, *The Theosophical Glossary*—and her numerous

articles in *The Theosophist*, in *Lucifer*, in *The Path*, as well as in other magazines, are a mine of information for the student ; as an exponent of the Esoteric Philosophy she stands unrivalled in the present generation, but she claimed for herself no infallibility, she frankly stated that there were many mistakes in her writings, and she strenuously asserted the right and the duty of each to use his own intellect and judgment and not to accept blindly the authority of any writer.

Colonel H. S. Olcott was a man who had played a highly honourable part in the war between North and South, and had held a responsible appointment under the U.S.A. Government; he was also a journalist of repute, and was engaged in investigating and reporting on the famous spiritualistic phenomena at the Eddy's farm when he met Madame Blavatsky there among the visitors. Attracted by her evident knowledge of occultism he became her friend, and he was selected as President for life of the new Society ; to it he devoted himself with splendid courage and loyalty, battling against ridicule, slander and opposition of every kind, side by side with his heroic woman-colleague. He is still living, the President-Founder of the Society, and has his home at Adyar, near Madras, India, at the Headquarters of the Indian Section and of the whole Society.



The Society has three Objects :

(1.) To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.

(2.) To promote the study of Aryan and other Eastern literatures, religions, philosophies and sciences, and demonstrate the importance of that study.

(3.) To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the psychic powers latent in man.

Of these three objects the first is the only one which is binding on all members, the two others being meant to subserve the first. The carrying out of the second, revealing the East to the West, tends to break down the barriers of race and creed, and there is no brotherly service the East can do to the West comparable to the unveiling of her hidden treasures of spiritual knowledge, the pouring out of her jealously-guarded spiritual truths ; ever has the East been the mother of religions, and she comes now again to the aid of the West, sorely pressed by the advancing hosts of Materialism. The third object also tends to Brotherhood, in that it leads man to understand himself and his environment, and finally demonstrates to him the underlying spiritual unity of all beings. But both these objects require for their prosecution special capacities and special opportunities ; they are not, therefore, binding on members, but are voluntarily taken up by those

who are attracted by them and who are able to pursue them. Leaving such aside, probably most members have a sympathetic feeling towards them, and many even pursue them in a dilettante sort of fashion ; but a person may be entirely indifferent to them, and yet if he believes in human brotherhood and is willing to work for it, he has full welcome and standing in the Theosophical Society.

• For this promotion of human brotherhood is nearest the heart of the Sages who work for the welfare of man. On this point They have left no possibility of doubt. Thus Master K. H. wrote to Mr. Sinnett :

“The chief object of the Theosophical Society is not so much to gratify individual aspirations as to serve our fellow-men. . . . You have ever discussed but to put down the idea of a Universal Brotherhood, questioned its usefulness, and advised to remodel the Theosophical Society on the principle of a college for the special study of Occultism.”\*

This the Brotherhood refused to do. If an Anglo-Indian Theosophical Society was to be formed it must be only as :

“A branch of the parent body, as is the British Theosophical Society at London, and contribute to its vitality and usefulness by promoting its leading idea

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\* *The Occult World*, 5th ed., p. 72.

of a Universal Brotherhood and in other practicable ways."\*

A yet higher authority wrote very plainly on the subject:

"Shall we devote ourselves to teaching a few Europeans fed on the fat of the land, many of them loaded with the gifts of blind fortune, the *rationale* of bell-ringing, cup-growing, of the spiritual telephone and astral body formations, and leave the teeming millions of the ignorant, of the poor and dispised, the lowly and the oppressed, to take care of themselves and of their hereafter the best they know how? Never. Perish rather the Theosophical Society, with both its hapless Founders, than that we should permit it to become no better than an academy of magic and a hall of occultism. . . . And is it we, the humble disciples of the perfect Lamas, who are expected to allow the Theosophical Society to drop its noblest title, that of the Brotherhood of Humanity, to become a simple school of psychology. . . . He who does not feel competent enough to grasp the noble idea sufficiently to work for it, need not undertake a task too heavy for him. But there is hardly a Theosophist in the whole Society unable to effectually help it by correcting the erroneous impression of

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\* *The Occult World*, 5th ed.; p. 74.

outsiders, if not by actually himself propagating this idea."

With equal clearness and from the same two great Easterns were laid down the lines on which work should be carried on and the objects which, in their minds the Theosophical Society might accomplish by spreading abroad the Aryan teachings. Said Master K. H. :

"The same causes that are materializing the Hindû mind are equally affecting all Western thought. Education enthrones scepticism, but imprisons spirituality. You can do immense good by helping to give the Western nations a secure basis upon which to reconstruct their crumbling faith. And what they need is the evidence that Asiatic psychology alone supplies. Give this, and you will confer happiness of mind on thousands. [Third object of T. S.] The era of blind faith is gone ; that of enquiry is here. Enquiry that only unmasks error, without discovering anything upon which the soul can build, will but make iconoclasts. Iconoclasm, from its very destructiveness, can give nothing ; it can only raze. But man cannot rest satisfied with bare negation. Agnosticism is but a temporary halt. This is the moment to guide the recurrent impulse which must soon come, and which will push the age towards extreme atheism, or drag it back to extreme sacerdotalism, if it is not led

to the primitive soul-satisfying philosophy of the Aryans. [Second object of the T. S.] . . . You and your colleagues may help to furnish the materials for a needed universal religious philosophy; one impregnable to scientific assault, because itself the finality of absolute science, and a religion that is indeed worthy of the name, since it includes the relations of man physical to man psychical, and of the two to all that is above and below them. Is not this worth a slight sacrifice? And if, after reflection, you should decide to enter this new career, let it be known that your Society is no miracle-mongering or banqueting club, nor specially given to the study of phenomenalism. Its chief aim is to extirpate current superstitions and scepticism, and from long-sealed ancient fountains to draw the proof that man may shape his own future destiny, and know for a certainty that he can live hereafter, if he only wills, and that all 'phenomena' are but manifestations of natural law, to try to comprehend which is the duty of every intelligent being.\*

With equal clearness did the other Sage previously quoted from write as to the dangers menacing our present civilization and the functions of the Theosophical Society:

"The intellectual portions of mankind seem to be fast dividing into two classes, the one unconsciously

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\* *The Occult World*, pp. 94. 95.

preparing for itself long periods of temporary annihilation or states of non-consciousness, owing to the deliberate surrender of their intellect, its imprisonment in the narrow grooves of bigotry and superstition—a process which cannot fail to lead to the utter deformation of the intellectual principle; the other unrestrainedly indulging its animal propensities, with the deliberate intention of submitting to annihilation pure and simple in case of failure, to millenniums of degradation after physical dissolution. Those ‘intellectual classes’ reacting upon the ignorant masses, which they attract and which look up to them as noble and fit examples to follow, degrade and morally ruin those they ought to protect and guide. Between degrading superstition and still more degrading brutal materialism the white dove of truth has hardly room where to rest her weary unwelcome foot.

“It’s time that Theosophy should enter the arena. . . . The Theosophical Society was chosen as the corner stone, the foundation of the future religions of humanity. To achieve the proposed object, a greater, wiser, and especially a more benevolent intermingling of the high and low, of the Alpha and Omega of society, was determined upon.”

Such, then, are the aims of the Theosophical Society, such the scope of its work. Anyone who enters its Brotherhood should consider himself pledged to serve

men as brothers, and it is this service that is reckoned as the essence of Theosophy. No acceptance of the Esoteric Philosophy, no search after knowledge, no desire for occultism, suffice to make a man a Theosophist, if his life be not one of helpfulness to man :

“He who does not practise altruism, he who is not prepared to share his last morsel with one weaker or poorer than himself; he who neglects to help his brother man, of whatever race, nation or creed, whenever and wherever he meets suffering, and who turns a deaf ear to the cry of human misery; he who hears an innocent person slandered, whether a brother Theosophist or not, and does not undertake his defence as he would undertake his own—is no Theosophist.”

The members of the Theosophical Society are thus connected by an ethical rather than by an intellectual bond, and their unity rests on a sublime ideal, not on a formulated creed. The Society has no dogmas, insists on no beliefs, endorses no church, supports no party, takes no sides in the endless quarrels that rend society, and embitter national, social and personal life. Everywhere it cries to men, “Peace! ye are brothers”; everywhere it proclaims, “There is no religion higher than Truth.” It seeks to draw no man away from his own religion, but rather impels him to seek in the depths of his own religion for the spiritual nourishment he needs. The Aryan teachings it presents, by

its second object, it presents as subjects for study, not as dogmas to be blindly accepted; those who find them to be intellectually, ethically, and emotionally satisfying, accept them; those who do not, reject them; others accept some and reject others. That each should show to the religion of others the respect that he claims for his own, is understood as an honourable obligation in the Society, and perfect mutual courtesy on these matters is expected from members. More and more this leads to coöperation in the search for Truth, to softening of prejudices, to liberalizing of minds, and to the growth of a gracious friendliness and willingness to learn. Thus the Society not only strikes at the twin-foes of man, superstition and materialism, but it spreads wherever it goes a gentle and refining influence of peace and goodwill, forming one of the forces that make for good amid the conflicts of modern civilization.

From its early days there has been within the Society an inner circle of members who have undertaken heavier obligations than the light one of ordinary fellowship; all these members definitely accept the Esoteric Philosophy, believe in the Masters, regard H. P. Blavatsky as their messenger, and are willing to make sacrifices for the advancement of the Society and to work for all its objects perseveringly and unselfishly. They enter this inner circle in order that they may become more useful servants of humanity,



seeking spiritual knowledge with the one object of helping man, and so coöperating, however feebly, with the great Brotherhood that is ever working for the spiritual progress of mankind. At first this inner circle was called the second degree, or second section, of the Society ; in 1888 it was more fully organized as the Esoteric Section, and in 1890 its name was changed by H. P. Blavatsky, its Head, to that of the Eastern School of Theosophy, and its official connection with the Society was severed by her, so that the perfect neutrality of the Society might not be imperilled. Only members of the T. S., however, are eligible for admission, as the main object of the School is to form devoted workers for Theosophy, and the T. S. is the agency chosen by the Masters for the spreading of Theosophical teachings through the world. The School forms a doorway for those who seek the Masters for the sake of serving man more wisely and effectively, but the finding of Them depends wholly on the love and devotion brought by the candidate to the search.

## II.

### THE ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY.

The Esoteric Philosophy is a body of knowledge, embracing all truths that can be known during the present cycle of human evolution. These truths have been discovered, verified, and reverified by men in

whom the spiritual nature has been so fully evolved that for Them Nature has "no veil in all her kingdoms." \* These men have in all ages formed a Brotherhood, in whose charge this body of knowledge remains, and They give it out gradually as the races of men become capable of assimilating it. Truths relating to man's spiritual nature have been imparted from it and have formed the basis of the various great religions of the world ; truths of an intellectual kind have been given out as the lines on which the great philosophies have been built ; truths touching physical nature have been taught to give fresh impulse and direction to science. These benefits have been brought to men by members of the Brotherhood who have been worshipped or persecuted, adored or slain, according to the temper of the times in which their mission lay. Such have been the founders of great religions, as Zarathushtra, Lao-tze, Krishna, Osiris, Buddha, Jesus ; the identity of the origin of religions may be proved by the identity of their fundamental teachings, both as to the spiritual nature and as to ethical obligations : that the universe has its source in One Life ; that man's spirit is the offspring of that Life ; that man may therefore rise to his source and rebecome one with It ; that human life on earth is a means to an end, and that end the perfecting of the soul ; that man is an immortal spirit linked with

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\* *The Voice of the Silence*, 1st ed., p. 14.

a lower nature, and that the purification of the lower nature and its union with the spirit are the means whereby the lower may share the immortality of the higher; that all men are brethren and that the law of love is the law of progress; such are some of the truths that will be found in every religion, however great may be the differences in the intellectual presentment of them as dogmas, or in the rites and ceremonies used in different communities. As the same water may be held in vessels differing in size, in shape, in decoration, but drawn from any of them, quenches the thirst of men, so may the water of spiritual life be found in all religious vessels, and may be drawn from them for the refreshment of the soul athirst.

Thus also with philosophies. The great Sages who gave to India the Upanishads belonged to the same Brotherhood as did Those of whom Plato was one, who gave to Greece, and to the Western world through her, the immortal teachings that have moulded the systems of the modern world. The thought of Pythagoras, faded from the West, was revived in the sixteenth century by Giordano Bruno, and he, "the second Pythagoras," renewed the intellectual impulse on the old lines of Greek and of Indian thought. And in our own days, not by the coming of one of these Great Ones, but by lesser men inspired by the

study of Their writings (as in old India were the Rishis who founded the Indian schools of thought), we have from every side—from Germany in Fichte Kant and Schopenhauer, from America in Emerson, from Engln in Berkeley, not to mention the noble succession of mystics, Eckhart and Boehme, Fludd, Vaughan, St. Martin, Swedenborg—echoes of the early teachings, repetitions even of the early conception, mixed indeed with much alloy, but none—and this is significant—none scaling loftier heights, none plumbing more abysmal depths, than were measured by those gigantic Teachers of the past, round whose feet cluster the teachers of to-day. Those who would test these statements need only study the world's philosophies, and they will find the same identity of fundamental conceptions running through all the non-materialistic schools as may be found in the religions of the world.

And thus, also, with the sciences. We find in India the beginnings of astronomy, geometry, medicine, with psychology carried to a point unapproached in modern times; in China, Egypt, Chaldæa, Greece, science flourished, and in all these lands applied science left triumphs of engineering skill at which our punier world still looks with amaze. In mediæval Europe Paracelsus gave the impulse which guided chemistry, medicine and magnetism to the lines on which modern triumphs have been won. Von Helmont, Greatorex,

and Mesmer made possible Charcot and Liébault, and the French experimenters had done sounder work had they followed more closely the lines of their greater predecessors. To-day Crookes, Lodge, and a whole group of young and progressive thinkers are pressing on into regions of psychology and physics already mapped out by the Esoteric Philosophy and familiar to its devoted students. For in science, as in religion and in philosophy, the Esoteric Philosophy, the Atma-Vidyâ or Spiritual Wisdom, is the complete body of truth, and by the study of it we may learn what men shall know in the future as well as that which they are learning with toil and pains—and with much loss of time in devious byeways—to-day.

Thus we postulate a great Brotherhood of spiritually illuminated men, guardians of a body of teachings, existing from an immemorial past down to the present day, and we point in proof to the succession of great world-teachers, giving out identical doctrines in garbs fitted for the times of such unveilings. They have been called Initiates, Adepts, Mages, Hierophants, Mahâtmas, Elder brothers, Masters. Little matters the name; that humanity should have such Helpers, that is the sublime truth and consolation. Always and in many ways They work for man, and the Theosophical Society is one of the agencies started for man's helping on Their impulse. Their blessing

rests on it just so far as it is faithful to its mission but They do not directly guide save where guidance is strenuously sought and eagerly obeyed.

The main teachings of the Esoteric Philosophy are :

The ONE, from which all proceeds, in which all exists, and to which all must return. As to THAT, all words are idle, all thought impossible, all speculation useless ; by us, the manifested and conditioned, the Unmanifest, the Unconditioned, cannot be known.

Universes coming into manifestation by the outgoing of the Great Breath from the ONE ; the Logos, or Word, coming out of the Silence, the beginning of manifestation, emanating as the primeval Trinity, the threefold aspect ; the First, Substance beyond our imagining ; the Second, dual—spirit-matter, energy-form, life-condition—the subtlest roots from which spring all manifested things, essence of spirit, essence of matter, incognizable by human faculties ; the Third, the great Mind, Universal Consciousness, or BEING as conditioned, moving within the limitations inseparable from manifested existence. From these, in endless gradations, endless combinations of subtle and gross, endless varieties of consciousness, all things come forth ; hence every part of the universe, from loftiest spiritual entity to tiniest molecule in grain of sand, has life, has consciousness, has form, for each is from the Logoi, reflects in its own measure the Logoi,

has its own dual aspect of spirit-matter; no spirit without form, no form without spirit, such is the law in all manifested worlds.

As rays from a sun, all spirits flame forth from the Great Mind; here is the source of their being, here the Central Fire whereof all are sparks. Hence the underlying unity of all beings, and as they approach nearer and nearer to their fount, they come nearer and nearer to each other. The realization of this unity of origin makes them see the Supreme Soul in all things, all things in It, and thus the sense of separateness is destroyed and the One is recognized as All.

From the Logoi proceed first the higher spiritual entities that are concerned in the great cosmical processes, they who build up the universe and direct the cosmic forces. These are the Gods of the Hindû religion, as of the Egyptian, Chaldæan, etc.; they are the Archangels of the Christians. In the Esoteric Philosophy they are spoken of as the Builders, the Lipikas, the Dhyân Chohans, or Lords, and the Planetary Spirits. To them succeed the entities concerned with natural forces of a more restricted character; the lower Gods of Hindûism, the Angels of Christendom, the high Elementals of the Esoteric Philosophy. Then the hosts of inferior entities less developed in consciousness than is man, known by an almost endless variety of names, and classed as the lower Ele-

mentals in the Esoteric Philosophy. The point to be grasped in this department of the Esoteric Philosophy is that Nature is not to be regarded as a soulless unconscious machine, but as a congeries of living entities; that every force, every energy, is the expression of consciousness, of will, ensouled by these entities; that each grade works in obedience to more highly evolved consciousnesses, and that therefore all kinds of material activity in Nature can be controlled by the soul, by the action of the will consciously directed to command these inferior entities, as higher kinds can be controlled by the use of spiritual energies. This is the *rationale* of what has been called "practical magic," and its possibility is an inevitable corollary from the constitution of Nature as taught by the Esoteric Philosophy, and as known to the Occultist, *i. e.*, to the man who studies the workings of the Universal Mind in Nature.

Every atom in the universe mirrors the whole in its constitution, but man is a miniature image offering special advantages for study, partly because he is the most available, partly because the various regions of consciousness are more developed in him than in the other living things that surround him. Faculties latent in them are functioning in him, and so may be studied in activity. Each region, or "plane," as it is called, of consciousness which he



develops in himself puts him into *rappor*t with the corresponding plane in the universe, and as he becomes self-conscious on each he may gain direct knowledge of that plane.

These planes are seven in number, according to the Esoteric Philosophy, and they are generally numbered from below upwards. They may be regarded as stages in consciousness, in each of which consciousness works in a different way because working under different conditions. Thus spirit working in dense matter organizes the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, or physical nature, the matter becoming more and more ductile and making higher combinations as this evolution, guided by spirit, proceeds. All this makes the physical plane, and man's body belongs to this, and is built up of tiny living particles; by means of his body man comes into contact with physical nature, and the particles of his body, set in motion by impulses from without, are the instruments whereby he is able to gain knowledge of the physical plane, and to affect it in turn. He is always taking in and giving off minute molecules, the materials out of which the cells of his body are builded; he stamps on all parts of his body his own characteristics, and, scattering them abroad, thus physically affects his surroundings directly, and affects them indirectly mentally, morally and emotionally.

The second plane is the astral. Astral matter is less dense than the physical, and serves as the medium whereby the forces of the life-plane can act on the physical molecules. Astral matter envelops every molecule of physical matter, thus interpenetrating every part of our physical bodies, and surrounds us as an aura, the constitution of which varies with our physical and psychical state. Dr. Richardson's "nervous ether" is one aspect of this astral matter, and the existence of electrical currents in the body proves the presence of this ethereal medium, without which no such currents could pass. A great part of the astral matter may be withdrawn from the body during earth-life, as the Astral Body, or *Linga Sharîra*, as it is technically called, but such withdrawal leaves the physical body but half-vitalized and is not unattended with danger. Such a withdrawal occurs in trance sometimes in illness or during sleep. The phenomena of clairvoyance and clairaudience, and many of those of mesmerism and hypnotism belong to this plane and are connected with the conscious or unconscious use of the astral body and of the inner senses working in astral matter.

The third plane is that of Vitality, *Prâna* or Breath. The Great Breath, or *Jîva*, is called *Prâna* when it is appropriated in man, and it is the coördinating life-force that keeps the physical body as an organized

whole. At death, its vehicle, the Linga Sharīra, withdraws from the body, carrying with it this co-ordinating force, and then the tiny lives that make up the body run riot, disintegrating the whole.

The fourth plane is that of the desires, passions and emotions of the animal nature, and is called that of Kāma, desire. This aspect in the human being completes the lower man, sometimes called the animal man, and these four "principles," as they are often termed—physical body, astral body, vitality, desire—make up the instruments whereby man feels, suffers enjoys, experiences, in a world in which these four planes are developed. And that which works in and through them is the Real Man, the Thinker, technically Manas, or spirit working in the fifth stage of matter, manifesting as intellect, ideation, self-conscious will, that which corresponds in the human being to the Third Logos in the universe.

This Manas, the fifth principle, is the Human Soul, immortal, imperishable as regards its essence, embodied in animal man for the sake of gaining experience and so evolving further towards union with the spirit, and also for the sake of individualizing spirit and making it active and self-conscious on all planes of existence. To the achievement of this double purpose its nature is adapted; it has its higher aspect, the Higher Manas, reaching up towards spirit and

storing experience ; it has its lower aspect, the Lower Manas uniting itself to Kâma, the fourth principle, and through it reaching the three lower principles. This is what we know as "Mind," the Lower Manas and Kâma, called Kâma-Manas ; it works in the brain, is the user of the inner senses which are correlated to the outer ones, those of the body, and may either be submerged in the animal man, held captive by desire, or may purify and raise the animal man and lift him towards that fifth plane of consciousness to which it belongs rightfully itself. Manas is "the God fallen into matter," and the Lower Manas is that part of the God that is submerged. The whole process of distinctively human evolution is the struggle of this God to rise to his own place, carrying with him the lower nature he has redeemed. That lower nature informed by him is the personality, and the success or failure of each earth-life depends on the extent to which the essence of the personality is assimilated with the immortal Soul. For a personality may wreck itself and perish, wrenching away in its downward plunge the Lower Manas from its source. Or it may be so purified that the Lower Manas, withdrawn into its source after death, may carry back with it the essence of that personality and so give it immortality.

Thus Manas becomes dual when it incarnates, and rebecomes one when disembodied ; Lower Manas is

breathed out into a body and breathed in again after death, as the Great Breath causes a universe and draws it in again when manifestation is suspended. The whole period of its pilgrimage is thus divided into alternate stages of embodiment and disembodiment. The stages of embodiment are called reïncarnations, because it takes on a body over and over again, and in each earth-life it learns some lesson of experience and garners into itself the result thus obtained. Manas is the storehouse of all these accumulated experiences of many lives, and the character manifested in any particular incarnation is the result of these experiences, or, more exactly, of such part of these experiences as can be manifested through the embodiment then in use. The whole of Manas is coloured, as it were, by these experiences, and the ray, the Lower Manas, has the colour of its source. By these repeated incarnations the soul evolves, becomes strong and wise, and gains an ever-increasing mastery over physical, astral and kâmic conditions. As this mastery increases, the successive bodies take more strongly and swiftly the impress of the soul, and become more and more ductile instruments. Thoughts mould successive astral bodies, and as the physical bodies are built into these, their form also ultimately depends on thought, which in man, as in the universe, is the great moulding and arranging energy. Further

as evolution proceeds, the illusions of matter have less power over the Lower Manas, and the ray being less clouded more closely resembles its source and shares its higher consciousness; gradually the accumulated knowledge and experience of Manas pass freely down its ray into the brain of the personality, and the higher and lower consciousness become unified, "God manifest in the flesh." This is one of the lower grades of Adeptship, the commencing triumph of soul over matter.

The stages of disembodiment, after the soul has shaken off the perishable part of the personality, are spent in a state of consciousness which has been named Devachan, a blissful mental state, in which the soul assimilates the experiences of the earth-life just closed, and works out all the unfinished trains of thought started in that life. A life that is poor in thought and in love will be succeeded by a poor and barren Devachan, while one rich in these respects will be followed by a rich and varied Devachan. Unselfish love, pure aspiration, noble thought, these products of the soul fill the Devachanic state with bliss, and hopes and desires for human good and human progress which have failed of realization may be so worked out during the Devachanic life that on return to earth the soul may be able to carry them out into action, having learned wisdom by failure and the way of successful effort by meditation.

As souls are separated from each other by the illusions of matter, and as the veil of illusion in Devachan is, though still present, thinner than during earth-life, the union between souls that love each other is closer there than here. In fact, Devachan is the normal life of the soul, and the successive incarnations are brief interludes that break into it. For average persons it is said to last for some fifteen centuries, but it has no exact period that can be set down, as it varies within very wide limits.

The period between the time at which the soul leaves the body and that at which it enters Devachan also varies widely, depending on the nature of the earth-life just closed. The withdrawal of the astral body, which carries with it the other principles, is "death," and for a very brief space these principles remain with the astral body; they then shake it off, leaving it to disintegrate as the physical body also decays. The five remaining principles pass on into the region of Kâmaloka—the land of Kâma or of desire—and here the Lower Manas has to disentangle itself from Kâma, and so break the link which holds the soul in bondage. The process is long or short according to the relative strengths of Kâma and Manas. If the mind has been fixed on earthly things, on material luxuries, pleasures, appetites, so that Kâma has been fed and Manas starved, a long and painful

struggle ensues between the soul that strives to free itself and the brute that holds it down. But if the life has been temperate and pure, and filled with noble thoughts, then it is the animal that has been starved, and the soul sleeps peacefully for a brief space while the earth-links fall off it, and it wakes into its Devachanic life.

As the soul thus passes successively through earth-lives, lives in Kāmaloka, lives in Devachan, while it takes up body after body, each differing from its predecessor, it will readily be seen why the soul is regarded as the real Man, the Individual, the eternal Pilgrim treading constantly the path of evolution. The transient personalities, each of which contributes its quota of experience to this Individual, cannot be regarded as the Man, as the real "I." They are but the garments that the soul puts on, and that it casts away when they are worn out.

It will also be seen that in all these stages, these lives in different regions, the man reaps ever as he has sowed. Unbroken causation everywhere, the harvest according to the seed. This truth is expressed by the word Karma, a Sanskrit word meaning literally action, but used to express the unbroken sequence of cause and effect. As a Master has pointed out, a man generates thoughts and these thoughts take form; these thought-forms coalesce in the astral world with



elementals. and so take on a life of their own as entities, beneficent or maleficent according as the thought was good or bad. These, peopling the astral atmosphere of the soul that gave birth to them, form his Karma, and life after life he works out his destiny amid the surroundings which he has thus made for himself. He cannot escape his Karma, but the way in which he meets it generates fresh good or fresh evil for the future; he must work to-day amid the surroundings he has made, but his work is making changed surroundings for to-morrow; as surely as the present is the outcome of the past, so is the future the outcome of the present, so that man is not the slave of destiny but its master, in that he is its creator.

But no one soul can separate itself and its destiny from that of other souls, since it is constantly affecting them and being affected by them on all planes. On the physical plane the continual interchange of the tiny lives of which all bodies are composed brings about a physical brotherhood that we cannot escape, and lays on each a duty to purify all lives to which he is host, and to send them out improved not worsened by their stay with him. On the astral plane we affect each other by the subtle vibrations of astral matter that carry influences from the three planes next above—vital-magnetic, emotional, intellectual—and so establish a bond of brotherhood that is a source of bless-

ing or of curse according to the nature of the influences sent forth by each. *We must influence others*, but we can choose what kind of influence we will use ; we cannot escape brotherhood, but we may either help or harm our brothers. And the vast ethical value of the Esoteric Philosophy is not only that it establishes the fact of human brotherhood, but that it also gives the knowledge which enables us to make that fact fertile of good for man. Now it may be seen why the true Founders of the Theosophical Society, as the guardians of the Esoteric Philosophy, made the establishment of a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood the one essential and obligatory object of the Society.

There are two principles remaining not yet touched on, to complete the evolution of man, latent to-day in all save the Masters, but none the less present in all. The sixth principle is Buddhi, and no description of it at this stage is possible. We can see its effects in the great Initiates who have founded religions. in Their clear vision of spiritual truths, in the authority of direct knowledge which marks Their utterances. It has been called the Spiritual Soul, the faculty of spiritual discernment; Manas united to Buddhi becomes the Spiritual Ego, and that union is the achievement of the higher Adeptship. It lifts man above the power of material nature, it makes him master of life and of death, it opens to him Nirvâna, the state of perfect

knowledge, of perfect bliss. And shining on all beings, source of their existence, sun whereby they live, is Atmâ, the One Self, the Self of all. "He who sees me in all things, all things in me," says Shrî Krishna, "of him I will never let go, and he shall never let go of me." On this let us meditate in silence; we cannot know until we become.

Such is a brief, bare outline of some of the leading teachings of the Esoteric Philosophy. Men of all religions will recognize among them doctrines familiar to them under other terms in their own faiths, and they will see that the Esoteric Philosophy comes to the world as a friend of religion, and makes possible a strong intellectual defence for much that has rested merely on faith and on the intuitions of the human heart. Not only so, but by showing the rock whence the varying faiths have been hewn it enables men of goodwill everywhere to work for religious peace and for mutual respect among those of different creeds. Its aspect towards all religions is, therefore, that of helper, friend and peacemaker; it deepens and instructs religious faith and stands as breakwater against the waves of materialism.

Towards Western science its aspect is that of opponent, when science becomes materialistic, denies occultism, dogmatizes on spiritual things, scoffs at the soul, undermines religion. But when science investi-

gates nature, records its discoveries, patiently works by way of experiment, accumulates facts, systematizes knowledge, it has nothing for it but good words and readiness to encourage. If help is asked for, then, to gain it, science must ally itself with love of man and seek to employ its knowledge for human help only and not for human destruction. It must become moral in its aims, and seek knowledge not for the sake of knowledge only but in order that knowledge may subserve human good. Thus has a Master spoken, and on such a matter the word of a guardian of the Esoteric Philosophy is authoritative.

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DEVOTION  
AND  
THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

A LECTURE

BY

ANNIE BESANT.

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## DEVOTION AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

*The soul cannot be gained by knowledge, nor by understanding, nor by manifold science nor by devotion, nor by knowledge which is unwedded to devotion.—Mundakopanishad iii. II. 3, 4.*

That, which is from the oldest Scripture of our race, is really the motto on which I am going to speak to you to-night, and I am going to try to trace—for you the famous two paths of the finding of the Self—the paths which may be trodden separately, but which for the perfection of Humanity must finally blend into one. The one path is the Path of Knowledge, and it leads to Liberation; the other path is the Path of Devotion, and that, joined to right knowledge leads to that eternity of Service which it is the greatest glory of man to attain.

But before I take up these two paths, there is just a word or two to be said on a matter which may clear the way, in order that we may definitely understand the roads along which we are to travel in thought to-night. Altogether apart, as we may say, from these Paths of Knowledge and Devotion which lead severally to Liberation and to the Great Renunciation

there are the paths which are followed by men who have not yet taken on themselves the duty of discipleship, but who are men good and earnest in their lives and doing good work in the world—that is the path of action, the path where Karma is generated, and good action and good desire generate good Karma. But Karma ever brings a man back to re-birth. Myriads of years may intervene—nay, in some cases millions of years may intervene—but still the end of work is re-birth, still the end of desire is to “pass from death to death.” Works which are good and useful to humanity gain their reward. Putting it in Christian phrase, we should say, they gain Heaven; putting it in Hindû phrase, they gain Svarga; putting it in Theosophic parlance, they go to Devachan; and beyond the temporary Devachan, or Svarga, or Heaven, there is a possibility of work done so well with a view always to its result, that you may have that Heaven of the Kosmic Devas which you read of in the Hindû writings, where one, who has passed beyond ordinary humanity, and has won by effort these higher seats in Heaven, may reign throughout the course of a Manvantara and may direct the kosmic processes of the worlds. But whatever comes of work finds its end. Neither Liberation nor the Great Renunciation can close the path of the man who work with a view to results; for nature is ever just, and



what a man pays for he will obtain. If he works for the sake of reward, the reward will come to him from the unerring Justice that guides the worlds. So good deeds become exhausted; so the result of good Karma comes to an end; and whether it be in this or in any other world, the end is sure and back to re-birth must come the Ego who has worked for reward and whose reward at length is exhausted. But, says one of those great Scriptures with a quotation from which I began, there is a time when the study of works and of the worlds of works is exhausted. Then comes the time whereof it is written :

Let the Brahman after he has examined all these worlds that are gained by works, acquire freedom from all desire. Nothing that is eternal can be gained by what is not eternal.<sup>1</sup>

When all desire is exhausted, then the Path of Knowledge or of Devotion may be entered on.

Let us take the Path of Knowledge. Knowledge of what? Not the learning of the world; not those many sciences which may be gained by the intellect alone; not that long course of study laid down in the Indian books; nor even the mastery of the sixty three sciences into which all human learning is divided. When we speak of the Path of Knowledge we mean more than intellectual learning, we mean the path which leads to spiritual knowledge, that is, to the

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(1) Mandukopanishad i. II. 12.

knowledge of the One, of the Self, that is the seeking for that Brahman, for by knowledge He may be found, by knowledge He may be entered into. And there are some who chose the Path of Knowledge unallied to Devotion, and who tread that Path ever, life after life, until the right to Liberation has been gained. Let us try to realize the steps of such a path. First there must be the recognition of the one on whom all worlds are built, of the One, the Self eternal and unchanging that throws out universes, as a spider throws out its web, and draws them in again,<sup>1</sup> the one Existence which is at the root of all, supreme, incognizable by human thought: knowledge recognizes the One without a second. The next stage in that knowledge, in recognizing the one, is the realization that all things that take on separate forms must have an end, that in very truth there is no separateness in the universe, but only appearance of separation; the One without a second who alone exists, who is the One and the only Reality, That is realized as the Self of each, as the one Life of which all forms are only transient mānifestations. Thus the recognition of the absence of separateness must be a step on this path of knowledge. Until absence of separateness is realized the soul passes from death to death.<sup>2</sup> But more than this realization of non-

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(1) Mandukopanishad i. II. 12 (2) Kathopanishad, Valli IV. 10.

separateness is needed. There is the distinct and the deliberate effort to realize that the Self of the universe is the Self of man dwelling in the heart, that that Self, as we saw a few weeks ago, clothes itself in sheath after sheath for the purpose of gathering experience, and on the path of Knowledge sheath after sheath is stripped from off the Self, until the very Self of all is found. For this, knowledge is necessary. First the knowledge of the existence of the sheaths, then the knowledge of the Self working within the sheaths, then the realization that those sheaths can be laid aside one after another, that the senses can be stilled and silenced, that the self can withdraw itself from the sheath of the senses until they no longer function save by the will, and the voice of the self may be heard without the intrusion of the outer world.

And then the sheath of the mind—that also we considered in our study—the sheath of the mind in which the Self works in the internal world of concepts and of ideas; that also is recognized as external to the soul, and the soul casts that aside as it casts off the sheath of the senses. And then realizing that these sheaths are not itself, realizing that the Self is behind and within these, this knowledge of non-separateness becomes a practical realization, not only intellectually admitted but practically realized in life. And this must

inevitably lead to renunciation. But, mark you it is the renunciation which draws itself away from the objects of the senses and the objects of the mind by a deliberate retiring within the Self, and this exclusion of the outer and of the inner world is most easily followed by retiring from the haunts of men, most easily accomplished by isolation from the great Brotherhood of Humanity, most easily won if the Self that thus seeks this, separates itself from all others that are illusory and in that quietude of an external world realizes the inner isolation.

Then, supposing that that absolute exclusion be not accepted, there may still be renunciation—renunciation by knowledge, renunciation by the deliberate will that no Karma shall be generated, renunciation by the knowledge that if there be no desire then no chains of Karma are made which draw the Self back to rebirth. And, mark you—for I want you to keep this in mind, and you will see why presently—it is essentially the renunciation of the man who knows that while he desires he is bound to the wheel of births and of deaths, and that no liberation is possible for him save as these bonds of the heart are broken. Then realizing this, if he is still compelled to act, he will act without desire, if he is compelled to live amongst men he will do his work careless of the results that flow therefrom. Renunciation which is complete, but

renunciation for the sake of escape, renunciation in order that he may gain his freedom and escape from the burden of the world. And so once more it is written that :

When they have reached the Self (that is when they have realized Brahman) the Sages become satisfied through knowledge; they are conscious of their self, their passions have passed away and they are tranquil. The wise having reached Him who is omnipresent every-where, and devoted to the self, enter into Him wholly.<sup>1</sup>

That, then, is the goal of this Path of Knowledge a lofty state, a state supremely great and mighty where a soul serene in its own strength, calm in its own wisdom, has stilled every impulse of the senses is absolutely master over every movement of the mind, dwelling within the nine gated city of its abode, neither acting nor causing to act. But a state of isolation, though a state great in its power, in its wisdom great in its absolute detachment from all that is transitory, and ready to enter into Brahman. And into Brahman such a soul enters and gains its liberation, to remain in that union for ages after ages—a time that no human years may reckon, that no human thought can span—having reached what the Hindu calls Moksha, in perfect unity with the One and with the All, coming out from that union only when the great Manvantara

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(1) Mandukopanishad, iii. II.

redawns, and out of that state of liberation life again passes into all manifested forms.

Turn from the Path of Knowledge to the Path of Devotion. Here right knowledge may not be ignored. Right knowledge—for that is needed, otherwise the world cannot well be served; right knowledge because the union must be the goal, although a union differing somewhat from that which is gained by knowledge; right knowledge, because if right knowledge be absent then even love may go astray in its desire of service, and may injure where it fain would help. So that we must not have devotion unwedded to knowledge, for the knowledge is needed for the perfect service, and perfect service is of the essence of the life of the devotee. But the goal of the Path of Devotion is conscious union with a supreme Self which is recognized as manifesting through all other selves, and those other selves are never left out of thought until the union of all selves is found in the One. For in this Path of Devotion love is the impulse, love that is ever seeking to give itself to those above it that it may gain strength for service, and to those below in order that the service may be done. So that the true devotee has his face turned upward to those that are higher than himself, that so he may gain from them spiritual force, spiritual strength, spiritual energy; but not for himself, not that he may be liberated, for he

desires no liberation till all share his freedom ; not in order that he may gain, for he desires no gain, save as he may give ; not in order that he may keep, but in order that he may be a channel of blessing to others. So that on the Path of Devotion the Soul is ever turned to the light above, not that itself may be enlightened, not that itself may shine, but that it may serve as focus and channel for that light, to pass it on to those who are in darkness ; and its only longing for the light that is above is in order that it may pass it onward to those that are below. That then is the first, the supreme characteristic of the man who would follow the Path of Devotion. He must begin in love, as in love he has to find his end. In order that this may be, he must recognize the spiritual side of nature ; he is not to be alone. It is not enough that he should recognize the Self, that he should recognize the One of whom all forms are but passing manifestations ; he must recognize, those passing manifestations in order that he may be equipped for service. So that he will begin by recognizing, that out of the One Eternal Source of Life—the Self, that is, of all—there come out the various sparks that are spiritual Intelligences in every grade of evolution ; some mighty spiritual Intelligences that in past Manvantaras have gained their victory, and who come out of the Eternal Fire ready to be Lights in the

world. Those he will recognize as the supreme embodiments of the Spiritual Life, those he will recognize as the foundations of the manifested Universe, those he will see far, far above himself; for the evolution behind them has carried them onwards through many Nirvânas to the place at which they emerge for the manifestations of our own Universe, and he will give them—the name matters not—but some name that will carry with it their supreme spiritual greatness, call them Gods, or call them what you will, so that you realize in them the supreme embodiments of Spiritual Life towards whom the Universe is tending, and in Union with whom it finds itself on the threshold of the One.

Those then first he will recognize. And then stretching downwards from them in countless hierarchies grade after grade of Spiritual Intelligences in all the manifested forms of life in the spiritual side of the Universe, downwards continually through the mighty Ones Whom we speak of as Builders of the worlds, whom we speak of as Planetary spirits, Whom we speak of as the Lords of Wisdom, downwards from Them to those great Ones embodied in the highest forms of Humanity that we name the Masters, and Who reveal to us the Divine Light which is beyond Themselves; and then downwards still in lower and lower grades of spiritual entities, until the whole Universe to him



is full of these living forms of Light and of Life, recognized as one mighty Brotherhood of whom the embodied selves of men form part. Therefore his path is in the realization of Brotherhood, and not in the effort for isolation. It is not liberation that he asks for himself, it is power of service that he claims from the Highest, in order that he may help those who have not yet reached the place where he stands himself. And, therefore, I said that the Path of Devotion begins in love and ends in love, begins in love to every sentient creature around us and ends in love to the Highest, the highest that our thought may conceive. And so recognizing this Brotherhood of Helpers he would fain be a conscious helper with them all—taking his share in the burden of the Universe, bearing his part of the common burden, and ever desiring more strength in order that that strength may be used in the common helping, ever desiring more wisdom in order that that wisdom may be used in the enlightening of the ignorance around. He then will not be isolated, nor will he be content with the recognition of the Self within. On the contrary he will ever be seeking to serve, and he will recognize the selves without as well as the Self within, and he will renounce. He too realizes renunciation, as the man on the Path of Knowledge realizes it; but his renunciation is of a different kind. It is not the

stern renunciation of knowledge, which says : " I will not bind myself by attachment to transitory things, because they will bring me back to birth " ; it is the joyous renunciation of one who sees beyond him the mighty Helpers of man, and who, desiring to serve Them, cannot care for the things that hold him back, and offers all to Them—not sternly in order that he may be free, but full of joy in order that he may give everything to Them ; not cutting asunder desire with an axe, as you might cut the chain that binds you, but burning up desire in the fire of devotion, because that fire burns up everything which is not one with its heat and with its flame. And so he is free from Karma, free because he desires nothing save to serve, save to help, save to reach onward to union with his Lord, and outward to union with men. And this service will indeed detach him from the senses, it will detach him from the mind ; but the very detachment will be that he may serve better. For this is the lesson which is learnt by the dovotees ; that while it is his duty to act, because without action the world could not go on, while it is his duty to act in the very spot in which he finds himself, because there lies the duty for which he has come to birth and which he therefore should perfectly discharge,—realizing that he is here for action, he will act ; but it is not so for *himself* ; his thought will ever be fixed on the

object of service and on love ; and the senses, as Sri Krishna said, the senses and the mind will move to their appropriate objects while he himself remains unfettered within. And then realize the gain. If we work our very best, if we work our very wisest, if for love's sake we give our best thought and our best effort to the service of man, then the very moment the act is accomplished we have no desire as to result, save that it shall be as the Wiser Ones above us will and guide. And if thus we cut our selves free from the action, if having done our share in it, we leave to Them an unfettered field where all great spiritual energies may play, unbarred and untouched by our blindness and by our weakness; and if this spirit of devotion be within us, if we give our very best to the service of men, then, if leaving the act to Those who guide the destinies of the world we take no further interest in the result we leave Them to correct our blunders by Their wisdom, our errors by Their righteousness ; we leave all to Them, and the very blunder that we make loses most of its power for mischief ; and though we shall reap pain for the mistake that we may have made, the issue will be right, for the desire was to serve and not to blunder. And if we do not mix our own personality with it, if we leave the field clear for Them to work, then even out of our blunder will come the issue of success, and the failure

that was a failure of the intellect only will give way before the mightier forces of the Spirit which is moved by love.

And then all anxiety disappears. The Life which is at peace within in this devotion has no anxiety in the outer world ; it does its best, and if it blunders it knows that pain will teach it of its blunder, and it is glad to take the pain which teaches wisdom and so makes it more fit to be co-worker with the great Souls who are the workers of the world. The pain then for the blunder causes no distress ; the pain for the error is taken only as lesson ; and taking it thus it cannot ruffle the Soul's serenity which wills only to learn right and to do right, and cares not what price it pays if it becomes a better servant of man and of man's great Teachers. And so doing the best and leaving the results, we find that what we call devotion is really an attitude of the Soul, it is the attitude of love, the attainment of peace, which having its face turned ever to the light of Those within it, is always ready for service, and by Their light finds fresh opportunities of service day by day.

But you may say : To whom is this devotion paid ? The root of this devotion must be found by each of us in the place in which we are, to those who are living around us in the daily life we lead. No talk of devotion is worth anything if it does not show itself

in the life of love, and that life of love must begin where love will be helpful to the nearest. And the true devotee is one who, just because he has no thought nor care for self has all thought and all care for those who are around him, and he is able, out of the great peace of his own selflessness, to find room for all the troubles and strifes of his fellow-men. And so the life of devotion will begin in the home, in the perfect discharge of all home duties, in all the brightness that can be brought into the home life, in all the bearing of the home burdens that the devotee can bear, in the lightening of every burden for others and the taking on himself the burden which he takes away from them. And then from the life of the home to the life of the wider world outside, giving there his best and his choicest. Never asking, is it troublesome? Never asking, is it painful? Never asking, would I not rather do something else? For his only will is to serve; and the best that he can give is that which he wills to give. And then from that outer world of service, choosing his very best capacities to lay them at the feet of mankind, out of that life of service to the nearest first and then to those who are further away, will come the purifying fire of devotion which will make his vision clearer for Those who be beyond him and above. For only as man serves and loves those who are around him will the eyes of the

spirit begin to be opened, and then he will recognize that there are Helpers beyond him ready to help him as he is helping others. For mind you, on this Path of Devotion there is no help given to the individual as individual; it is only given to him by the Great Ones beyond him if in his turn he passes it on to others. His claim to be helped is that he is always helping, and that therefore a gift to him as individual is a gift that in very truth is given to every one that needs. And then as his eyes become clearer, and he recognizes these many grades of spiritual Intelligences, he will realize that there are some of them embodied around him; and by recognizing those that are embodied around him but are greater than himself, he will be able to climb upward step by step until he will see the yet greater Ones beyond these; and then having reached Them, the greater, that are still beyond. For in this path of spiritual progress by way of devotion, every step opens new horizons, and every clearing of the spiritual vision makes it pierce more deeply into that intensity of Light in which the highest Spiritual Intellegences are shrouded from the eyes of the flesh and of the intellect. And so the Soul who is in him, the Soul of the devotee, will gladly recognize all human excellence around him, will love and admire that excellence wherever he finds it; he will, in fact, to use a word which many scoff at—he will

be a hero-worshipper, not as seeing no fault in those whom he admires, but as seeing most the good in them and loving that, and letting the recognition of the good overbear the criticism of the fault: loving and serving them for what they are to man, and throwing the mantle of charity over the faults which they may commit in their service. And as he sees and recognizes this in those around him, he will come into touch with higher Disciples than those who move most commonly in the world of men, those who have reached a little further, those who have seen a little deeper. Spirits that are gradually burning up all ignorance and all selfishness, and who are in direct touch with Those Whom we call the great Masters, the Members of the great White Lodge; and then he will love and serve Them if opportunity should offer, love and serve Them to the utmost of his ability, knowing that all such service purifies himself as well as helps the world, and makes him more and more a channel for the energies which he desires to spread amongst those with less vision than himself. And then, after a while, through these into touch with the Masters Themselves, with those highest and mightiest embodiments of humanity, high above us in Their spiritual purity, in Their spiritual wisdom, in Their perfect selflessness, high as though they were Gods in comparison with the lower humanity, because

every sheath in Them is translucent, and the Light of the Spirit shines through unchecked ; not differing from men in their essence, but differing from men in Their evolution. For the sheaths in us shroud the Light, within us, while the sheaths with Them are pure, and the unsullied light shines through unchecked ; and They it is who will help and guide and teach, when man has risen to Their Feet by this Path of Devotion that I have spoken of; and the touch with Them is the going forward on the Path of Spiritual Knowledge, but without this devotion the further heights may not be won.

And here I take to read to you words that came only a day or two ago from an Indian Disciple, which will give you the meaning of devotion far better than any words of mine. He wrote :

Devotion to the Blessed Ones is a *sine qua non* of all spiritual progress and spiritual knowledge. It gives you the proper attitude in which to work on all the planes of life. It creates the proper atmosphere for the soul to grow and flower in love and beauty, in wisdom and power. It tunes the harp of the heart, and thus makes it possible for the musician to play the correct notes. That is the function of devotion. But you must know the notes you have to play, your fingers must learn how to sweep along the strings, and you must have a musical ear, or better still, a musical heart.....What is proper tuning to the musical instrument that devotion



is to the human monad. But other faculties are needed for the production of various sweet strains.

There you have the meaning of devotion in a few words. It is the tuning of the heart. Knowledge may be needed for the different strains that are wanted, but devotion tunes the heart and the soul, so that every strain may come out in perfect harmony. Then is the growth in love, then is the growth in knowledge, then is the growth in spiritual purity; then all the forces of the spiritual spheres are helping onwards this soul that fain would rise for service, and all the strength of Those Who have achieved is used to help on the one who would fain achieve, in order that he may better serve.

And what does devotion mean in life? It means clearer vision so that we may see the right; it means deeper love so that we may serve the better; it means unruffled peace and calm that nothing can shake or disturb, because, fixed in devotion on the Blessed Ones, there is nothing that can touch the Soul. And ever through those Blessed Ones there shines the light which comes from yet beyond Them, and which They focus for the help of the worlds, which they make possible for our weak eyes to bear.

And Then there are the peace, the vision, the power of service—that is what devotion means in life; and the Self whom the spotless devotee is seeking, that

Self is pure, and that Self is Light<sup>1</sup>—Light which no soil may sully, Light which no selfishness may dim, until the devotee himself vanishes in the Light which is himself. For the very Self of all is Light and Love, and the time at last comes, which has come to the Masters, when that Light shines out through spotless transparent purity and gives its full effulgence for the helping of the world. That is the meaning of devotion. That, however feebly phrased—and all words are feeble—that is the inner life of those who love, who recognize that life is only meant for service, who recognize that the only thing that makes lifeworthy is that it shall be burnt in the fire of devotion, in order that the world may be lighted and may be warmed. That is the goal which ends, not in liberation, but in perfect service. Liberation only when all Souls are liberated, when all together enter into the bliss unspeakable, and which, when that period of bliss is over, brings them out again asconscious co-workers with unbroken memory in the Higher Spiritual regions ; for they have won their right to be conscious workers for ever in all future Manvantaras ; for the Life of Love never gives liberation from service, and as long as eternity endures the Soul that loves works for and serves the Universe.

1 Mandukopanishad iii. I. 10.

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THE PLACE OF POLITICS  
IN THE  
LIFE OF A NATION.

A LECTURE

BY

ANNIE BESANT.

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# THE PLACE OF POLITICS

## IN THE LIFE OF A NATION.

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I AM to try to speak to you this evening on Politics, their place, their possibilities: what can by Politics be done, and also what cannot be done by them. Now I am going to try and sketch for you the work of the politician, the limit of politics and also its utility. I am going to try and show you how in this world changes are made, how in this world great reforms may come to be, how in this world there are laws which condition the reforms, there are laws which govern every possibility that lies in front of a nation; and in these days of confusion and unrest—days in which every man desires to do the work of another, days in which all duties are confused and you have a general attempt by each to do everything and so to do nothing well—in these days of confusion of duties and ignorance of powers, it may be well that in such a vast assemblage as this, gathered from every part of the motherland to speak her needs in the ears of the world, and to explain her wants so that all may understand; it may be well in such an assemblage that a voice should be heard that deals with principles more than with details, and tries to suggest the lines along which a

nation may travel, and not only the various steps which, in the travelling, that nation may take. And so, I am going to suggest to you to-night, that in Politics as in everything else, in the choice of political methods as in every other choice, a man needs sound thought to make right action; that unless there is a basis of philosophy for conduct, the conduct will be erratic and unsatisfactory. For I want, if I can, to show you this evening that the politician has his great and important place in the life of a nation; but that he does not stand alone, and that others also are necessary in order that national life and national work may be wisely carried on. I do this because I know time is wasted unless the principle of action is understood, and that if men live from hand to mouth in politics, just as if they live from hand to mouth in other spheres of activity, they may often for a momentary gain incur a serious danger, and judging by the things of the moment only may lose the very object that they really desire to obtain. I am going therefore to try and show the principle underlying human action, the sequence of events in national as in individual life, the law in nature which cannot be violated.

In order that we may understand each other clearly let me begin by saying exactly what I mean by politics, what I include under political action, and therefore the place that political action, it seems to me, must fill in national life. I mean by "politics" every form of activity which is carried on in a particular geographical district, under a Government of any kind that rules over that district, no matter what that Government may be called—imperial or local, municipal or parliamentary. The point is : there is a

certain geographical area governed by a particular body, and that body lays down rules of action which in the last resort have force to fall back upon to compel obedience. So that the characteristic of political action is that it has a particular geographical district in which it is carried on, a body that carries it on, and that lays down certain enactments for every one who lives in the district, and then those enactments depend for their compulsory power not on argument, not on reasoning, not on voluntary action, not on choice, but they rest ultimately on the basis of force, and obedience to them is compelled and not voluntary.

Now that is at least a very straight-forward declaration as to what I mean to include in political action. If the Parliament of Great Britain passes a law, that law has sway over the district for which it is passed, and in the ultimate resort force will be used to compel obedience. If a despotic monarch rules over a state, every one in the state may be compelled to obey his behests. I distinguish political action from voluntary action by the element of force that enters into the constitution of the former, and the fact that if you want to escape from the scope of the action you must leave the geographical district over which the political government has authority.

Having made then that definition for politics and political action, I pass to the next point in my argument : the constitution of society and the two great opposed ideas on which society may be built. Society may be built, and has been built for many a thousand years, in different parts of the world, on the idea that each man is part of a great organic whole, a

society, and has certain duties that he is bound to discharge. Men in society have certain functions; men in society have certain duties; and many of the old fabrics of society, especially, are ordered by this idea of inherent duty based on the nature of a thing, on what is expressed by the word Dharma. It means the duty which each man has to perform, by virtue of his in-born nature. Each man has his own place, each man has his own duty in society; the gathering together of all the vast varieties of men makes a society, and its welfare depends on the orderly discharge of duty, the perfect fulfilment of the function of each. Then there has arisen the idea, the idea that at the close of the last century swept all before it in the West, and on which was builded another type of society entirely differing in its fundamental thought. It was the notion of the rights of man. You find that in the great American Revolution there was a cry, the cry of those who threw off the English authority, the cry of the rights of man, that was emblazoned on their banners, that was the cry underneath which they marched to war, and when the United States of America were founded, they were founded on the declaration of the rights of man, the right of liberty, the right of equality, the right of fraternity, and so on until the idea of rights became the fundamental conception of the nation and the whole of that vast republic today is built on this thought of the inherent rights of man. And then from America across the Atlantic the same idea swept into France, and in France gave birth to the Great Revolution, which changed the political state of the people; this was in the same way inspired by the notion of the rights of man. And so in England you find all through



the present century that this cry of the rights of man has been the battle cry of democracy, and out of this idea of the rights of man democracy has gradually arisen, and the leading nations of the West founded themselves on this notion of human rights. But lately, during the last few years in the western world, there has come about from the teaching of western science rather a revival of the olden idea that society should be based on duty more than on right, on the discharge of function more than on the self-assertion of the individual. For to take men as individuals, to disregard their functions to each other, to be careless about the duty that each owes to his brother, to study man as though he were alone instead of being part of a great human family—this is as though you were to take a heap of marbles on a table and taking up one marble deduce from the condition of the marble that which you then would apply to the heap to build it into a single whole. That idea of an isolated individual, who having rights of his own has a claim to assert them against every one, and who is only bounded by the equal rights of every body else, is an ideal of combat, an ideal of struggle of man against man, and of life against life; and no more can you gain an idea of a real society by taking a man separately, as though he were a marble and society a heap of marbles with no cohesion in them, you can no more do it and understand society, than you can tear from the living body one of its organs, and, studying the organ by itself, try to understand the working of the whole. For to understand the human body you must study it in life, in the functions, in the working of every part, in every single organ doing a particular work, not for its own gain but for the common good; and

the nobler ideal that is spreading amongst men is that we live not to assert our rights but to do our duties, and so to make one mighty unity where each shall discharge his functions for the common good of all.

Now India is in this remarkable position, that from her own past she brings down the ideal of a system that is essentially founded upon duty; but by the changes through which she has passed through many a century, passed long years ago, dating backwards and backwards and backwards to the earliest conquests that swept over her borders, India is today a strange compound of conflicting theories, of conflicting ideas, is a strange compound of an ancient nation ruled politically by a modern people, and the two ideas are here face to face; both of them have many to support them: One, the old idea of duty, which would make the progress of the future pass always along the lines familiar in the past; and the other, urged by those who would take as it were the western system completely, transport democracy from America and Great Britain into Indian soil, use the democratic methods, claim the democratic rights, employ here all the democratic organisation; not quite sure whether the soil will suit what is here an exotic, but forced by the necessities of the position to use some of the methods which are familiar in the hands of their rulers. For in a country like this where the masses of the people are of different languages, of different faiths, and different traditions from those who rule them, it is part of the necessity of the case that some amongst the people themselves should translate the popular grievances and speak out the popular desires. It is necessary in order that justice

may be done, it is necessary in order that a wise policy may be followed, that those who have the power should also be instructed in the knowledge of the wants of the people; and none can do that save those who belong to the people, who know the national desires and understand the methods along which those desires may be met. Therefore while, for my own part, I stand for the ideal of ancient India, and look on that as a thousandfold loftier than the mushroom civilizations that have grown up in later days, none the less am I bound to admit that we must deal with the country as we have it, and that where you are pushed into western methods you must adapt your own methods somewhat, so as to meet the new conditions, so as to deal with the new ways of thought.

And now having made these as it were preliminary outlines, let me take the great division of functions which will underlie everything that I have to say. There are three great ways of influencing human life and human conduct : the first and the greatest of all is the work of the thinker, who by himself alone, face to face with the problems of life, uses all the powers that he has, and looking out into air which is unobscured by the dust raised in the strifes of parties, deals with principle instead of detail, deals with essence instead of form, the Thinker, he who gives out to the world some mighty thought. The world is not yet ready for it; the world is not yet able to understand or to accomplish it; for these are men born so great, they are men born so much above their fellows, that as though they sat on a mountain peak while other men are in the valleys, they see far over the country over which the average eye is

unable to gaze. From the peak of great intellect and still more of great spiritual insight the Sage, the thinker, this mighty child of man, sees some supreme truth and proclaims it in the ears of the world. These are the great ones of our race, these are they who mould the future; these are they whose thoughts the lesser men accomplish by bringing down into action that which these mighty ones have thought. And from that realm of thought comes down every thing that works in human society. Thought is the creative power, thought is the evolving and the moulding and the controlling force. As the great thinkers think, the world acts generations afterwards. Action is but for a day, thought is everlasting in its generating energy; and therefore the greatest among the sons of men, nature's most imperial children, are the thinkers; they are the ruling sovereigns of the world, they endure as long as human intelligence endures, mightier than all other monarchs, greater than all other conquerors, for their rule is bounded by no nationality, and knows nothing of geographical limitations.

Then from the sphere of thought there comes down a great idea into the sphere of discussion; no longer only in the mind of the thinker, no longer only in the Ashram of the Sage, but taught by lesser men to crowds of the people, till the thought of the thinker becomes popular amongst the minds of men. It passes from the stage of thought into the stage of discussion; it passes from the brain of the thinker to the lips of the teacher; and the teacher going out amongst his fellow-men and gathering masses of the people together uses all his power of brain, all his imaginative ability, all his skill of golden tongue and

deftness of oratorical presentment, to popularise among these masses of the people that thought which was born in the brain of the thinker, and which by his work must become known to the minds of men. Thus the teacher going abroad popularises the great idea, until it begins to influence the minds of average men. So that you have first the thinker and then the teacher—standing as types of the two great stages of thought and discussion that have to be realised before an action is performed. Then comes the third stage—action. The thought which men have now gathered from the lips of the teacher is to be brought into the common life of men, to make it better than it was before. The principle is to be applied to practice. The great thought is to become bread for the hungry, and drink for the thirsty, and shelter for the homeless, and defence for the oppressed. There is the work of the politician, there is the work of the actor. He applies to practice that which the thinker has thought, which the teacher has uttered, and he brings it down into the practical life of man, and makes the common lot happier and better by applying to the ordinary daily life the great thoughts and the teachings that have gone before. So that you will realise that these three stages of thought necessitate three types of men that carry them out. Among them the greatest of all is he who thinks. The second is he that teaches, and then comes the actor that applies the thought to life. Let me take an illustration which will show you clearly what I mean, and which in this country will rouse no kind of antagonism of thought. There is a theory of life familiar in the West, known as Socialism. Many hundreds of years ago this idea of human brotherhood and of the assertion of the duties of man was

taught by great thinkers, such as Plato, in the West, and they were regarded as dreamers, they were spoken of as utopians, because the thought was too great for their generation, and their conception too mighty for the people to whom it first was told. Then came a stage when many took it up; hundreds and hundreds of years, nay thousands of years afterwards; and then from lip to lip, from platform to platform, from pen to pen, there spread the teaching of human brotherhood and the duty of man to man, until at last it so touched the popular mind, until at last it so touched the popular conscience, that it found its way into the English Parliament, and even Sir William Harcourt—you may not know his name, but if you did you would know that he never stands up for impossible ideals that have not caught the popular fancy—Sir W. Harcourt used a strange expression: “We are all socialists now.” It did not mean much. It only meant that the principle of action which it was politic to adopt was that which aimed at the good of all and not at the advantage of a class. Nothing more than that he meant by his careless phrase, but it marked the stage of action. This succession of stages will show you what I mean. First the thinker; then the many popularisers; and then the acceptance of the idea by the politician as a rule of political action.

Realising then that, let us also realise that all three are necessary. There should be no quarrel between the politician and the teacher, no quarrel between the politician and the Thinker, no hostility decrying the one or the other, and wrangling as to the importance of the functions and the duties of each. Each is necessary to the other. Each is wanted by the other. The

thinker is like the head, and without the head the body could not act; the politician is like the hands, and without the hands you could not have action though the brain should plan. Therefore they should be friends and not enemies, they should help each other and not be hostile in their work. To the Thinker the great ideal which is to mould the future of the nation; to the teacher the setting forth of the ideal, that men's minds may be guided by it and their thoughts be shaped; to the politician the putting into action, into legislation, the great ideal thus conceived and taught. That is the coherent progress in a nation where each duty is usefully and thoroughly discharged. But there should be no confusion between the functions. The Thinker weakens his power if he mixes himself up with the strifes of political parties and with the details of political work. The Thinker must remain in the serene atmosphere of thought, uninfluenced by the lower motives which needs must play on the men in the ordinary life of the world. Otherwise he will lose the clearness of his vision; otherwise the atmosphere, dimmed with passion and with the fogs of human parties, will no longer be translucent, so that his eyes may see the essence of truth. Not in the dust of crowds, not in the dust made by the whirling wheels of chariot, of carriage and of cart, not there would you seek for clearness of vision. When you want to see far far over the land, you go apart to a quiet mountain where the air is clear, where there is silence and not conflict; and the Thinker must be on the mountain of serenity, otherwise his thought will not be clear for the helping of man. Nor should the teacher be a politician; for the teacher is to put the ideal before the eyes of men. No ideal can at

once be put into complete practice, no ideal can be carried uninjured through the struggles of a legislative assembly; for there the principle has to be whittled away, has to be subjected to compromise, has to be narrowed down, in order that it may get through the readings that a bill must pass through in Parliament, and so catch from all sides the votes without which it cannot possibly succeed. In politics you have thousands of men, every man thinking differently, and a majority must be gathered by compromise. Suppose every one of you had to vote on a proposition laid before you by one person; how he would reckon the votes, how carefully he would have to consider them, how he would go about to one here and one there, and say "will you vote for me?" and one would answer: "Well, I agree with this much of your Bill, but I don't agree with that other point; can't you drop the point that raises the discord, and carry the other part of the measure for which we are all ready to vote?" Compromise is a necessary part of political action and you cannot avoid it. You must, when you are dealing with conflicting interests and the many minds of men, get something that the majority will agree upon; whether it be the best ideally or not, it is the best practicable thing. That is what the politician must consider and ought to consider. For his work is to make the outer world better, and to deal with the things which are ready for action. Therefore every statesman must necessarily compromise, and statesmanship is skilful compromise; he must work step by step towards the ideal that he desires to attain. Therefore I say, the teacher should never be a politician. Let him set up the ideal which politicians are to work towards; let him stand aloof, holding up



the picture which is to attract the hearts of men. That ideal will be a long way off; there will be a rough road between the place where the people are standing and the place where the ideal is upheld; that road has to be trodden; there may be a river which has to be bridged; there may be a bog that has to be crossed; there may be a precipice that you have to avoid there may be a wall over which you must climb. That is the work of the politician—to make the ideal ultimately realisable by going towards it. Step by step he must work in the right direction, and the ideal must be held up steadily, in order that the final direction may not be lost in the necessarily devious walking. Therefore is it that I, as Theosophist and teacher of principles, never mix in political detail nor take any share in these strifes of warring parties; therefore the Theosophical Society to which I belong, stands not as politician but as holder-up of ideals for every nation, for every party, for every man and every woman, no matter what the political systems or the political parties to which they may severally belong. Let me suppose for a moment that one man—to now use English names of parties—is a Radical, another man a Tory, a third man a Liberal, a fourth man a Socialist. Every one of these men may desire human progress, human happiness, increase of human prosperity, and growth of human power. They have a common ideal; they have separate ways of reaching it. In the Theosophical Society we hold up the ideal that they are to aim at, and leave each man to choose his own road and his own method of realising it, welcoming each man equally, whatever his party badge. As a politician he must choose his party, but as a Theosophist he only desires

the supreme ideal, and then works towards that object by the best efforts of his brain.

And now let me go a step still further. Some of you are politicians. How are you going to choose your lines of advance? Has it ever struck you that the current of thought in a nation is that which is seen in the hopes, the aspirations, the longings of the young? Not in the middle-aged men plunged in the work of life, not in the old men whose work is nearly over, but in the young ones of the nation, *there* is marked the line of national growth and the ideals that touch them are the ideals that the future of the nation will embody. Therefore the farseeing politician should watch what it is that moves most the young ones of his nation. Mind, they are often foolish, they are often headlong, they are often injudicious, they are full of passionate enthusiasm. Never mind. The world will tone down their enthusiasm fast enough, and they will not keep their headlong ways. Well if out of the enthusiasm of youth they keep something of noble hopes alive for middle age, and if out of the unselfish devotion of youth something remains to check the selfishness of the man of the world who has grown hard by contact with his fellowmen. Therefore I say watch the young, for what moves them is a movement of the future, and if you want to legislate on lines that will last, see what is most touching the hearts of the young ones; for there is the future life of the people, there is what it will desire.

Now for a moment to come to more detail. There are some points that politicians have a right to deal with, have a duty to deal with—the outer life of the nation. Politicians have the duty of dealing with,

for instance, taxation, with the amount of taxation necessary, with the incidence of taxation on different classes of the people, the way in which taxes shall be gathered, and the manner in which the taxes shall be applied. For the whole of that is political work, and the man who would be a politician must study that dry side of politics, if he would be of use to his country. Then he should also deal with questions of the tenure of land, the conditions under which the land of the nation shall be held, the conditions under which it shall be cultivated, the amount of rent that it shall pay, the amount of burden of the State that shall fall upon it; he should deal with all questions of mortgage and usury, what the law will enforce and what the law will not enforce, so that the weaker may not be oppressed and the poorer cultivators and the miserable may not be in the grip of the money-lender and unable to rescue themselves from his hold. He should deal with the prevention of tyranny, with the conditions of labour, with the conditions of child employment, with the conditions of child education, so that here the strong conscience of the nation may guard its weaker children, and may prevent any unfairness, may prevent any ill usage of the young. He should deal also with the weaker classes, protecting those who are starving against undue pressure from those who would employ them, using their necessities as a measure of their payment, and careless of human happiness provided wealth be successfully wrung from them. He should deal also with what the law enforces as to contracts, what contracts the law will make binding on the citizens of the State, what contracts it will decline to enforce; he should deal with the subordination of each to the

common good, not allowing one man in the exercise of individual liberty to become a danger to his neighbours or a nuisance in the community. He should deal with the defence of the country from external attack; he should deal with the administration of internal order, so that harmless men may live in peace and security under the aegis of the political government. He should control all methods of communication, internal communication, and if the people are taxed in order that these may be made, in order that railways may be completed and land may be surveyed for the laying down of the iron roads, then those railways should be made for the good of the people and for the benefit of the whole community, and should be planned out to serve the nation for the general use of the whole. It should not possibly be that within the limits of a nation, where there are railways supported out of the monies paid by the people, there should be vast stores of rice in one part of the country and thousands of starving people in another, and no communication to bring the two together so that the starving may be fed. These are the questions which the politician must deal with. These are the questions which the politician is bound to consider; and he fails in his duty unless he takes these in hand and represents what should be done about them to the Government of the country, so that prosperity may increase. To put the case in a nutshell. These duties of the politician are what were in olden days the duties of the Kshatriya, the great caste in the old days that had all these political duties in hand. That was the great body in the olden time that had this charge in the State, and was bound to administer it for the common good.

But your politician will fail in everything that he attempts, your politician will break down in every effort he makes, unless he has thought behind him, which renders permanent the changes that his action brings about. It is no use to make a law and then find the law inoperative, it is no use to make a change and find the old conditions returning under a new name, and that your work is wasted because the thought of the thinker is not behind it. Again let me take an illustration. In England we have a thing we call sweating. Sweating means that if I, a woman, am starving and if I go and try with a needle to earn enough to get bread and shelter and clothing, that as I am very hungry I ask very little for my labour, and the pressure of my hunger is made the measure of my payment and not the value of the work I do. In the London that I know so well, there are hundreds and thousands of women working for their bread, and working for 18 hours out of the 24, to earn enough merely to keep themselves alive, constantly hungry, constantly suffering, never knowing what it is to have enough to eat, and out of their incessant labor just managing to keep body and soul together; and then what they have made, when driven by starvation, is taken by the sweater, and is sold in the shops mostly at a low price, that even then brings a large profit, while those who made it are nearly dying of starvation. Oh ! you may say, the sweater is a scoundrel. Are you so sure that the fault is his ? The real fault is in the heart of men and women; who are tolerably comfortably off, who have money enough and to spare, and who want to buy things more cheaply than they can be fairly sold at, and demand things at a price that cannot give

a living wage. The blame is not with the sweater; he is the instrument that carries out the desire of ladies and gentlemen who are comfortably off, but who like to get a little more than they give and to get a little the better of their neighbours. So long as their desire exists, and as long as you and I and others want to take advantage of our brother's needs, so long may politicians enact laws against sweating every day of their lives, but sweating will continue in society, because men desire to gain and care not for brotherly love. And thus it is that we find the politician limited. He may make a good law, but if the people are bad the good law is useless. He may make an improvement in outside shape, but if the people are unworthy of it the old evils return despite the new shape he has made. Therefore is it that you need the *teacher*; therefore is it that you need the *thinker*; and only where they are at work in a nation, making noble ideals that purify the heart, only there will the politician be successful and the progress of the nation be secured.

And now for a moment let me speak to you on this question of ideal. This question will decide the future of India, and either lead her to her death or to her rising again amid the nations of the world. You are claiming political power, you are claiming political advance, and political representation. To what end are you going to use it, what purpose have you before your minds as to the national ideal that you desire to accomplish, the ideal that no politics can make but can only work for? It is the ideal that makes the politics and not the politics the ideal. Let us then see—for hereon depends the life of the nation; here comes in the question whether we shall

live or die, whether we shall survive or perish, whether the history of India is here to have an ending or a revival till she is as glorious as in the olden days. How shall you learn? By studying, by looking at the world around you and then using your best intelligence and judging what you see. The great nation that is spreading over the world and that has its home in Great Britain, that great English people, has two children in the world, both growing into mighty nations. One of her children is America, making the United States. Another of her children, the younger one, is Australasia, Australia and New-Zealand, where a vast nation is building. The thought of England influences you more than the thought of any other people; the thought of the Anglo-Saxon race is the thought that goes throughout the length and breadth of our land, that fascinates our young men with its science, that fascinates the ambitious with politics, that fascinates all the men who love pleasure with the delights of its luxurious civilization, and that stamps itself upon you in your clothes, in your thoughts, in your houses, in your methods of living, in your horses, carriages and everything. Go back a hundred years and compare India then with India now, and you will see what I mean, when I say that the English thought is dominating the nation and is impressing itself on all the habits of the people. If that be so—and that is unquestionably so—if that be so you had better study it where it has long been ruling and judge for yourselves whether the ideal is the best ideal for you to take when you are trying to build a new national life, and start in a definite national direction. England, the oldest of the three countries that I have named, great in her science, great

in the power of her sword, a small nation geographically, one of the greatest nations in her ruling power, that nation within the limits of her own borders stands amongst the nations of the world remarkable for this—the extremes of wealth and poverty that divide her people. London is the metropolis of the British Empire, London is the centre where all her glory is gathered, where her wealth is seen at its greatest, where her magnificence is best to be estimated. Your young men go and see the glitter of her wealth, they see the luxuriance of her civilisation. In London, the metropolis of the Empire, is gathered up as it were the ideal of the British nation, and just as you find the luxury which goes beyond anything else that the world is able to show, you see also a poverty so horrible that no other land can show its match. I know it. Why? Because my duty has lain there, because I have served on bodies that had to deal with the poverty of the people and the misery of this massed population; because in the School Board of London my own district was one of the poorest in London, that terrible East End of which you may sometimes have heard, but of which you have heard too little so long as you are dazzled with the glitter of western civilization: starving children, starving men, starving women, thousands upon thousands of them, day by day face to face with enormous wealth, so that the contrast is so bitter that every now and then you hear whisper of riot, whisper of revolution, whisper of thrown bombs and charging police; so that in the very centre of her home there is danger, because of the wealth and the poverty that stand face to face against each other. Leave Great Britain and go to America: what there do you find? You find that



there rank is given by wealth; the man who yesterday was a worker on a railway by clever speculation, by ingenious playing and gambling on the Stock Exchange, by getting news before his neighbours and using it, so that when the loss is coming he may transfer the depreciated stock to his neighbour's pocket and save himself from the danger. Study America, where the penniless workman of this year may be the millionaire of 20 years hence; America where wealth is the title to honor and wealth is the road to power. Not learning, not wisdom, not refinement, not courtesy, not careful thought, not self-sacrifice for human good, but money; where one man has so much wealth, that, unable to spend it, he makes a golden cradle for his baby while other men starve in the streets for want of food. What must be the inevitable result? America is now well-nigh in the throes of civil war, of a labour war, the most cruel and the most brutal of conflicts. You hear of thousands of men marching across the States, and crying out for work or for bread, and for some change in the condition of Society. For to make money the title to honor is the most vulgar of all civilizations, the most petty of all ideals, the most degrading object a man can put before his fellow-men.

And then if you go to Australasia what there do you find? I have just come back from it. I find material wealth abundant. I find comfort, rough indeed but plentiful, and I find they are seeking everywhere for wealth and pleasure. Everywhere gambling, everywhere racing, everywhere irreverence; and they are developing a peculiar type for young man, that is a special growth of the Colonies, that they call the Larrikin—having invented a name for him—a

youth who grows up without religion, without reverence for age, without sense of responsibility, who lives only for pleasure, for drink and for gambling, and these are growing up by thousands in the midst of that young civilisation. Why are all these nations in difficulty? Why are they in conflict? Why when you go to Great Britain, to America, or to Australia, do you find these signs which are evil signs, that are not the signs of growth but of decay? It is because they have chosen a material ideal of wealth, honor, rank, power, all the things that men struggle for against each other, and about which each man in gaining must disappoint his fellow-men. There is wealth indeed, but they scramble for the wealth; there is luxury, but they are always multiplying their wants.

There are two great ideals one over against the other, either of which a nation may choose. One of these is material wealth and increase of physical wants, and the gratification of those wants ever more and more; and the other is the knowledge of the intellect, is the wealth of wisdom, is the growth of art, is the cultivation of beauty, is the realising of man's higher nature. Art, science, and intellect, become the handmaids of the Spirit, so that the ideal is spiritual and not material, enduring and not transitory.

Which shall India choose? There is the point to which I have been leading. There is the point to which the whole of my thought has been directed. On the one side material advancement, on the other side spiritual growth; India between them, looking longingly towards the material wealth and the material luxury, but held back by an instinct that comes from the Spirit within her, that that is not the road to per-

fection, that that is not worthy of India's choice. And I will tell you why: As long as your ideal is material it is limited, and therefore conflict must arise. As long as your ideal is material it is repeatedly gratified, and then ever new gratifications are craved for, more and more; there is multiplication of wants and multiplication of satisfactions. What is the result? If I had here on this table a heap of gold, if I said, "I will give this gold to you," you know what would happen—the scrambling and the rush and the conflict, and one man climbing over the other, and the strong pushing the weaker aside, a rush and a fight and a miserable struggle. Why? Because the gold is limited, and if a man does not get to the front before it is all gone, he will be left without a coin, and his neighbours in front will have gained it all. But if I have spiritual wisdom to give and stand here for the giving, there is no need to fight, there is no need to quarrel, there is no need to be anxious to get in front lest it should all be gone; for while the material wastes in the using, the spiritual grows in the giving, and every man who finds a new truth and gives it to the world, makes every one who hears him the richer for the hearing and yet remains himself richer than he was before. For if I bring you some great truth, I know it all the better when I have shared it with you; I have not lost it because I have spoken it; it has become more real to me than it was before I spoke. I the giver and you the takers are all the richer for the common sharing, and that is the glory of the intellect and the Spirit, that the more their treasures are shared the more they grow, and the more widely they are spread the more complete is the satisfaction. The desires of the intellect,

the desires of the heart, the desires of the Spirit, these are increased as they are fed and they remain ever as a source of joy and not of conflict. So that if you choose the material ideal you choose strife, struggle, poverty, dissatisfaction, unrest and final death; whereas if you choose the spiritual you choose a peace that is ever growing, power that is ever increasing, strength that knows no diminution, and immortality of life. Which do you choose ?

Once there was a day when in India wealth was not the greatest thing, when in India rank was not the greatest thing, when the King was not so great as the spiritual Teacher, and the half-naked Sage was more honored than the wealthiest of the princes. That was the day that made India what she is in the eyes of the world; for all the world is reading Indian books, and studying Indian literature, and discussing Indian philosophy; and though the West has conquered your bodies your thoughts are conquering its mind. That is a mightier triumph, a greater conquest than any sword can give; and to-day again you have your choice, either to choose the greatest and the lasting, or to choose, the impermanent, the transitory. And so I appeal to you: you have brains amongst you, subtle, keen and strong; you have intellect amongst you, mighty and great both in thought and in power of expression; you have oratory amongst you as splendid as that which any nation can boast, tongues as golden in the beauty of linked syllables as any tongues that the world has heard, that the past has known. Are they all for the transitory, and are there none for the permanent ? Are they all for the wealth of the body, and none for the helping of the mind ? Are all the brightest brains to go into law,

into civil service, into politics, and leave only the second and third rate to deal with the mighty questions that move the minds of men in every time and every nation. I claim for India—not the India of material wealth but the India who was the mother of spiritual knowledge—I claim for her some of the brains of her greatest children, some of the noblest intellects, some of the purest lives, some of the most skilful tongues, some of the grandest thinkers. They are all attracted by the glitter of gold attracted by ambition, by desire to excel, attracted by the toys that are worthy of children. But I, who love India as my own, for she is mine, India with whom all my hopes of the future and my memories of the past are bound up, this India that is so great and yet so little, so mighty and yet so poor—I claim from the children that come from the womb of India that there shall be some worthy of the past, that there shall be some worthy of their mother, that there shall be some who shall give her what she asks, thought, philosophy, literature, science, the great things that she loves, and not merely the struggles of parties and the question that divide politicians. Some of the better brains should do this work, some of the abler tongues should preach it. I have told you the place for the politician, but some place is needed for the teacher and some for the Thinker. I plead to the young among you, who have not yet chosen their path in life, whose hearts are still soft and whose hopes are still pure. Turn aside from the struggles of the bar, turn aside from the examinations of the colleges, turn aside from the hopes of civil service, and the employment that is paid for with gold; give yourselves to the mother land, give yourselves to her help, give yourselves to her re-

demption; let politics be followed by some, not by all; but let not the other be forgotten since it is the more important thing. For politics will perish but thought remains. If you had only a political past, no one in the West would care for you to-day. Will you not give to the future what the past has given to you? Will you not hand on to the generations to come some addition to the treasures that the generations of the past have bequeathed to you? There are so many nations that are political, so many nations that are wealthy, so many nations that in the Western sense are great. There is only one nation the world knows that may still choose the Spirit instead of the body, and spiritual knowledge rather than material gain—only one nation amongst all the nations of the world, only one people amongst all the peoples of the globe. That nation is India, that people the Indian people; and if you, the last hope of the spiritual life of man, if you give everything to matter, then in your apostacy the world is betrayed, and in your spiritual death humanity shall find its grave.

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MATERIALISM  
UNDERMINED BY  
SCIENCE.

A LECTURE

BY

ANNIE BESANT.

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# MATERIALISM UNDERMINED

BY SCIENCE.

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It is now fourteen months, my Brothers, since last I stood amongst you when I came to Calcutta last January twelve-month. I had only then made the acquaintance of, as I may say, the India of the South, with the various aspects that there may be found in her laws and in her religious thoughts. Leaving your capital city I travelled northwards and westwards and visited several parts of India, those of the North and Northwest, and afterwards the Punjab. Thence I turned towards Bombay visiting several cities on the way, and then westwards back to Europe, there spending some months; and then southwards again to far Australia, where a new race is growing up, where a new nation as it were, is being born, and from that far off distant Isle, near to the South Pole, I come back once more to the Motherland amongst you again to bring you once more a message of the Eternal Verities of Spirituality, to speak amongst you once again the Eternal Truths which from ancient times have come down. For whether it be in India or Europe or Australia there

is one mighty Spiritual Truth to be proclaimed, the one thing needed for the soul of man and that is the knowledge of its wanderings after the Spirit, the knowledge of the Will of the Supreme. And whether in the lands of the West and South or whether under the fire of the tropical sun man is still demanding spiritual knowledge, is still struggling after spiritual life, still hoping for the same spiritual unity. To whatever land we may go, through whatever country we may pass, we have still Humanity as "the great orphan" crying for the Spirit, striving after Light, after spiritual unity, striving to find in the many exoteric religions the one Spiritual Truth which alone can satisfy the soul. And if I come back to you here and take up again the message which in this land has clothed itself in the ancient forms of Hindu religion from ancient times, it is not because India is the only land where human souls need it, it is not because India is the only country where the spirit of man is crying out for the Light, but it is because in this land there is more hope of a spiritual revival, and if a spiritual revival here there may be, then it will pour outwards to all the four corners of the world. For spirituality is more easily awakened in India than elsewhere. The spiritual heart here is only sleeping, whereas in some other land it has scarcely yet come to the birth; for you must remember that in this land is the birth place of every religion, and that from India, outwards, religions have made their way. Therefore it is that the soul of our mother India is so important for the future of the world, and therefore it is that the Materialism of India is so fatal. For it is here alone that lies the hope that man has of looking for spiritual life: for,

in truth, unless the life of the Spirit come in this land, by reviving here, then the hope is baseless that spirituality is to spread over the world. And I may say to you, ere glancing for a moment over the subjects with which I am to deal, upon this visit, that in travelling through the length and breadth of India, from South to North, from West to East, I have found this of the people : that in the South of India you have more pronounced and outward orthodoxy, you have the more defined observances of ancient ceremonies and ancient rites, that on the surface of the people, as it were, you see more of the outer signs of Hinduism and more exactitude in the discharge of the various religious duties. That is a characteristic of the Southern people; that is a marked attribute amongst their various communities. Far away in the Panjab, there you may find certain traits of manhood, of strength, of courage, which if they shall rise to the Spirit surely would give us great help, would give us an enormous reinforcement; for that race would move with force and energy, only perhaps slow to take action. In Bengal there is, as I have noticed, much outward sign of western influence, much of the surface of the people taking up western thought and western customs; but in the heart of Bengal there still remain, more than elsewhere, gleams of the ancient spirituality, so that, just as in spiritual matters India is the heart of the world, so is Bengal the heart of India and may save India as a whole for all Humanity. And therefore in speaking to you in the ten days which lie before me, I have chosen subject after subject which should all point to the one object,—and that is the revival of spirituality and the spread of the ancient Hindu re-

ligion in the hearts of its children, who are bound to it by ancestral ties. If you cannot revive spirituality in India through *Hinduism*, if you can not thus reach India, then there is nothing else you can hope to do; and I say that here alone is the one hope of reviving this ancient potentiality. Here is the one certain hope which will bind all the hearts of the Indians into one and therefore we must look to the revival of the ancient faith,—which however it has fallen, however much it has been corrupted in modern times, however much it may have lost spiritual life, is still the most ancient religion the world has ever known, sublime in its Philosophy and magnificent in its Literature. So that if this shall again become a living thing, India shall herself live; and with the revival all the sleeping truths of other religions shall look again towards their Indian mother, and make her once again the spiritual teacher of the world.

And now I am going to speak to you upon materialism; I am not going to deal now with a definite religious question, with definite religious teachings, with mighty doctrines in Philosophy, in Spiritual knowledge, which later on I shall hope to unfold before you. There is one thing that is eating the heart out of India, and that is modern materialism. There is one thing which is poisoning the mind of India, and that is the kind of science which is the teacher of materialism and works against Spirituality in the mind. How should I be able to tell you of the moral regeneration of India unless first I can strike at that which is piercing her heart and sucking out her very life-blood. So—as I have been trained in the science of the West, trained in the knowledge of the

physical Universe, which is so much used to make men believe that nothing but the physical remains—I take for my first subject, his undermining of materialism by science, and I attack it with the weapons that were once used to build it up.

Now it is fair to ask in the beginning why it is that religion and science should appear to be in opposition. Why is it that science should seem to play into the hands of materialism? Why is it that as science has advanced, Religion has found itself pressed backward and backward so that men begin to make excuses for spiritual truths and talk apologetically of religion? Why is it that men advocating spiritual truth are afraid of being called superstitious? Let us see whether there is no explanation why science at the outset should help materialism and the reason also why, as science has advanced, it begins to undermine the same materialism and to destroy that which it has helped to establish? You may remember Bacon, a great philosopher of the 17th Century, speaking on this very point used the following phrase:—that a little learning inclineth men to atheism, but deeper knowledge brings them back to religion. It is a true statement. Look for a moment at religion and science, and you will see why that should be the fact, and why one should be against the other. A man who is a spiritual man—a religious teacher—regards the universe from the stand point of the Spirit from which everything is seen as coming from the One. When he stands, as it were, in the centre, and he looks from the centre to the circumference, he stands at the point whence the force proceeds, and he judges of the force from that point of radiation and he sees it as one in its multitudinous workings,

and knows the force is One; he sees it in its many divergences, and he recognises it as one and the same thing throughout. Standing in the centre, in the Spirit, and looking outwards to the universe, he judges everything from the standpoint of the Divine Unity and sees every separate phenomenon, not as separate from the One but as the external expression of the one and the only Life. But science looks at the thing from the surface. It goes to the circumference of the universe and it sees a multiplicity of phenomena. It studies these separated things and studies them one by one. It takes up a manifestation and judges it; it judges it apart; it looks at the many, not at the One; it looks at the diversity, not at the Unity, and sees everything from outside and not from within; it sees the external difference and the superficial portion while it sees not the One from which every thing proceeds. You may imagine, to take a figure, that you stand where there is a white light—say an electric light sending out rays from a single point; imagine three tubes going out from this centre and rays of light travelling down each and passing through a glass of a different colour set in each tube; if you look from the point where the electric light is you would see the white light striking outward as a light which was one; but if you went to the far end of the tubes you would there see that the light was of three different colours, as red and blue and yellow, appearing as if the light was of three kinds not one, because in their separation unity would be entirely lost. See how that works in the Universe. You have your three great *gunas* or attributes through which, as it were, the light comes as through three different glasses, and the one Divine

Spirit comes down into manifestation; and it is not only the three *gunas* that you have but these intermingling one with another, and breaking in a thousand different channels. Then how great must be the differences at the circumference! But how it would lessen the difficulty if men could only see the processes, and know how those results were brought about; if they went further, and if travelling onward they found the divergences greatly diminish, see then how thus going forward, they may come as it were, near to the one, and reconciliation between Religion and Science may arise. Religion shows everything from the point of the Spirit and proclaims the unity. Scientists show everything from the point of view of diversity and proclaim that, as if in opposition, to the world. But Plato says of the man who can discern the one in the many, that that man he regards as a God; the work of the true spiritual teacher is to show the one under the multiplicity, to make man see the fact of unity underneath diversity, and as science goes forward she also may be used once more to help us, because in passing out of the physical into the super-physical and mental, she is going nearer to Unity.

And now let me turn to my science and give you the proofs of this. First let me refer you, though I need not dwell upon the point, to the remarkable position taken by Huxley in his latest writings, which were new when I was with you last year, but which remain unchanged, uncontradicted, as the latest proclamation of the great teacher of Agnosticism as the latest proclamation of its exponent in European Science. Two great points he made or rather three. First,—and I only mention these briefly, because

I dealt with them last year—first he pointed out that the evolution of virtue in man was directly in conflict with the evolution of the physical world: that when man evolved compassion, and tenderness and gentleness and self-sacrifice, when he learnt to use his strength for service instead of self-assertion,—he was flying right in the face of the laws by which progress had been made in the physical Universe. He was following the law of self-sacrifice as against the law of self-assertion. Why is it that man can thus set himself against the cosmos? It is because he is approaching the spiritual region; it is because he has begun to develop the essential nature of the divinity itself: for the life of God is in giving and not in taking; the life of God is in pouring out and not in grasping; and as man feels the life of the Spirit in him against the life of the animal, he grows Divinely strong. And when you find men of science admitting that the evolution of virtue is by the law of self-sacrifice, you may perhaps begin to admit the possibilities of what is said in some of the sacred scriptures, that Creation always begins with Sacrifice. You may remember that—I am quoting to you, leaving out only the first great word—"the dawn is the head of the sacrificial horse, of the horse which arose out of the water, the water which the commentary says represents *Paramâtma*." All creation is Sacrifice. The source or dawn is the sacrifice and everywhere the soul that would develop must live a life of sacrifice, because as the *Upanishad* says to you, a sacrifice of the Godhead was made in order that the world might exist. Sacrifice is the first condition in order that the Universe may be, and that man might be evolved to be one with Himself.



The second point made by Huxley, seems taken from the sacred books of India; man can set himself against the cosmos because in man there is an intelligence which is the same as the Intelligence which pervades the Universe. That is the lesson of the Shastras. The intelligence of man is one with the Intelligence which pervades the whole. Man can set himself against the external world, for "Thou art Brahman." and when that is realized by man all else becomes subject to his will. And the third belief that Huxley has thought fit to declare is that the working of consciousness in the higher cannot be understood by the lower. There is nothing against the analogy of nature in supposing that there are grades of intelligence rising above men. There may be other intelligences higher and higher and higher, reaching further and further far above the noblest intelligence of man. And there is nothing, he says, to make it impossible that there should be in the universe, above these grades—a Single Intelligence. But what is that? Nothing but what has been proclaimed in the Scriptures, Isvar, the Lord, the Logos, the Word of which all things were made. So that you may see how, on these lines, science in the mouth of one of its greatest teachers is undermining materialism.

Now let me go a little further. Let us see, not from the mouth of the teacher, but from the facts themselves, how changes are going on. Physical facts are being discovered which show that underneath the physical, mind must be at work. Underlying the physical, intelligence must be active; underlying a particle of what was once called dead matter, a metal, a crystal or a stone, there is a moving life,—there is a ruling intelligence. First let me say,—and the force of the argument may excuse the repetition of it,—that if you take a crystal, you find it grow along geometrical lines, with absolute definiteness of angles, as though a compass were used to trace it, and these lines make geometrical figures. So that Plato's

phrase "God geometrizes" is seen to be true even in the mineral kingdom. Then again when from the mineral you go to the vegetable where life is more active, where there seems to be less regularity, where there seems at first, less of order, you will find in reality that even in its multiplicity there is order, that in the vegetable as well there is the same immutable law. If you take the branch of a tree, you may study the way the leaves are set, and you will find every leaf in a definite place, both as regards the leaves lower down and higher up. So that the leaves of the tree are developed on a geometrical plan. More than that. Since I last stood here to speak to you, a series of investigations have been made into the way that metals behave under exercise. Every Engineer and other employer of machinery has noticed that when metal is used, where there are bars and wheels and other parts making up the machine, that with the use of the machine, what is called "fatigue" occurs. The metal gets tired. But what does this mean? It has been observed, that after a certain amount of exercise, the machine will not work well. It works like a tired horse or a tired man; it stumbles and can not carry on the work. What shall be done? Let it rest. It does not want improvement, as every part is perfect; it does not want repair,—there is nothing in it which is broken; it only needs to rest; and if it is allowed to rest it recovers from its fatigue, without a single thing being done to it, and it goes on to work as well as ever, showing that rest has given back its energies and that, just as a tired animal reposes, so also the "dead" metal may repose. This shews that even in a metal there is life—for a dead thing can not get tired a dead thing cannot lose its energies, a dead thing cannot be restored by rest. These are all signs of a living body; where there is fatigue and recovery of energies by rest, there is life existing, however hidden it may be under the form which conceals it from our eyes.

... And now for a moment turn to Chemistry. I took first that point of the metals because it is a point which on thinking over you will find exceedingly plain and intelligible. But turn now to Chemistry. One great argument which materialists used to take from Chemistry, was this: that as advances were made in what was called organic Chemistry, or the Chemistry of living things, it was shown that the separation made between organic and inorganic Chemistry was artificial. As a matter of fact, they said there was no fundamental difference and both organic and inorganic Chemistry were on the same lines; therefore they thought that the introduction of life as a thing separate and apart from chemical agencies must be given up. That argument was very much strengthened by chemists in the laboratory making certain things which before had been found only as products of vegetables and animals and which had been regarded therefore, as the outcome of living energy. These things were said to be things which could only be produced by living organizations. During the present century however a large number of these bodies have been made by chemists, and they have succeeded here in breaking down the barriers between the organic and the inorganic; and the result was that at once it was said, "you see life is only, after all, the result of chemical energy, and not an outcome from the supreme source, but only something in connection with the chemical energy; you were under a mistake in supposing those things were always found as products of living things, and therefore there is not needed to explain them a source of life from which all living things proceeded. See how the chemist has proved you out of court; see how he has made that which you said

could only come from life." Thus apparently, was one of the arguments knocked down which seemed to prove the life of the world as coming from the life which was Eternal and Supreme. But Chemistry, in the course of these very investigations, going along the lines called organic, has given us an argument stronger than the one attacked. It places within our reach arguments far stronger, far more potent than the one which it destroyed; for it shows that in the organic the atom is not only, as I told you last year, formed by the action of electrical currents out of primary matter, but it shows further that the atom here progresses; that the atom in the mineral kingdom is not at all the same atom of the vegetable in its combining power. It shows in that the change is not a change of material attributes, but a change of inner life, of internal differentiations,—the atom changes within itself, as all living things do; for one of the great signs of life used to be said to be this power of adaptation from within. Take an atom in the mineral kingdom such as carbon. All its combinations are simple, all its combinations are one by one. This fourfold atom can join with others in definite and simple combinations, but when it passes forward, having gone through the mineral kingdom, then by an inner evolution, it changes its combining power and unites with itself to form a number of compounds, forming closed rings, so as to make complicated combinations never found in the mineral kingdom. Taking the old story of evolution as laid down thousands of years ago, not in the modern but in the ancient forms, we learn that this atom is part of the Universal life, that it is not dead matter but a living thing, that atoms are minute lives which go to build up external forms.

We are able now to bring arguments from Chemistry to show that there is atomic evolution in the universe, that the progress of life which we see around us is no dream of the ancient Rishis but a reality. The scientists look only at the form and not at the inner life; but as you study the atom, you realise that this increased power of combination means evolving life within it. Not only is that seen, but it is also now admitted that life cannot be regarded as an outcome of chemical agency. It is admitted that life shows certain specific energies which differentiate it from electrical and chemical affinities, and you may get the phenomena of living things among the energies which science is unable to trace to their source. Once it were thought that life might be explained as the outcome of chemical and electrical agencies, but now it is admitted to be something more. Science now admits that although they are correlated with the life, they are not the life itself, and although they accompany the phenomena they cannot be regarded as their sources. So that from the chemistry which was the greatest hope of the materialist, we may now obtain arguments for its undermining.

Pass from that to electricity and see how here, in the latest discoveries, are arguments that may help our works. It is not only that science has proved that whenever thought is present, electricity is also present, interesting as that is, as showing the close relationship between them; but we are also told that there may be a development of an organ in the brain of man which will take cognizance of electric vibration directly, and not indirectly. Let me show you what I mean. You see the light here because the light makes vibrations and these vibrations strike on

the organ we call the eye. The eye is so put together in its minute parts, that these vibrate in response to the vibrations of the ether; so that whenever these vibrations are present, certain particles in the eye vibrate in response, and give to us the sensation which we call light. Now these vibrations are within narrow limits; there are vibrations in the ether both wider and narrower in wave-length than those which we call light, and to these our eyes do not answer. Therefore if they alone are present, we are in darkness; we cannot see. So again suppose we had developed the organ which is necessary to respond to the electric vibrations, while we had not the organ of sight. Then this room would be dark to us, though filled with the vibrations we now call light. Then the consciousness could not perceive the light. But if we had developed instead of the eye another class of organs which answered to the electric vibrations, and suppose a large electric machine were fixed at one end of the hall, and a strong electric current sent through the hall, we should be able to perceive because the organ in us would vibrate in answer to the electric current, and the current would reach our consciousness through this organ. The consciousness is helpless without an organ that receives from without, and only the body can receive and transfer vibrations to the inner intelligence. That has been very clearly pointed out, and to take a striking illustration used by Professor Crookes: suppose we had no eyes to see the light, and suppose we had an inner organ which answered to electricity. This air would be opaque and we could not see through it, while a silver wire going through the air would be transparent, would be like a tube going through a solid

mass. Though you would be able to perceive along the silver wire, because silver is a good conductor of electricity, you would perceive the air as a solid round the silver which would look like a hole. Do you see how rational the illusory theory can become when you learn a little more science? Do you see how matter is no longer the thing which it was, a solid material, but by a change in the organ of consciousness; what is solid to-day, may be permeable to-morrow? And thus the idea is largely right that regards matter as an illusion; for what we call matter is only a generalization of the impressions received by consciousness by way of the senses. It is the translation in consciousness of the unknown something which works upon us. In fact, what we call matter is but a reflection in the consciousness of an aspect of the Supreme Unknowable Unity, just as the Spirit is the reflection of the other aspect of the same Unknowable Unity. Thus science is bringing us back to this part of the ancient teachings, and if a materialist come to you and says that matter cannot pass from matter, just throw into his mind for him to think over, some of these later facts.

Pass I from that to another closely allied point—that of thought-transference. Thought-transference is now being acknowledged, though for a long time science was very doubtful as to its acceptance, and if you spoke to a man about it he most likely regarded you as a crank, or even called you a fraud, for it was easier to call you a fraud than to admit that they were ignorant. There are men for whom it is impossible to say "I do not know," but any body can say "you are a fraud." The ignorant who are not able to understand, people who are most self-opinionated

nearly always call out "fraud," when confronted with the unintelligible. Look now at thought-transference. Thought is a form-producing force; when Brahma thought, worlds appeared. In the ancient books it was always taken to be granted that action is an effect of the mind. But it has been asked contemptuously of the writers of these books, what did they know about modern science? What did they know compared to our advancement? For we are supposed to know everything nearly in this 19th century! Yet after all, the old writers have become justified by the facts. The old teachers have been justified by the later investigations. And some of the best of the younger scientists in England—the old ones are too prejudiced—are ready to take up facts, and they themselves have now performed the experiments that prove that thought-transference is possible. You have a man like Professor Lodge saying that his own experiments have convinced him and that he finds that thought can pass from mind to mind without what is called any material method. Not only he but the Psychical Research Society, which is an exceedingly "respectable" body from the public stand point, have conducted a number of most careful investigations on thought-transference. The results of these were published in a book some three months ago by W. Padmore, a member of the Society. You will find in this book a record of most careful experiments on the transference of thought from one to another, and the evidence is now so strong that it is impossible to put it out of Court.

Oliver Lodge speaking two years ago, said he was sure of thought-transference, but it was alleged that matter might be moved by the action of the will



without material contact, and of that he was not yet convinced. But within the last few months Mr. Lodge has himself carried on a number of experiments which have convinced him, he says, beyond the possibility of doubt, that an article may be moved from one place to another without physical contact at all; that bodies can be moved or suspended in the air without the means of physical support, and that he himself has taken part in experiments which have been carefully arranged by himself and other scientific men and they have proved that it is possible and it may be done over and over again. The experiments carried on included therein, the taking of small articles, and without physical contact passing it from one part of a room to another. The conditions under which these things were done were very rigid. They were carried on in a small island where there were no persons living except the Light-house-keeper and his family. It was a very little island, a mere rock. Mr Lodge and two or three others got the owner's consent to make their experiments there. They brought with them what is called a medium who belonged to the South of Europe, who could not talk the language of the inhabitants of the island, so that she could not communicate even with the family on the island, she being an absolute stranger never having been there before. They took her into a room with themselves only, with locked door, and there they performed the experiments in which these phenomena were produced. They kept the reporter outside in the balcony so that he could not be within sight of what was occurring. The reporter was put outside with a closed shutter between him and the people in the room. He was to write down what he heard, but he was not

able to see what happened. Mr. Lodge said he was himself absolutely convinced; he said he could not as yet explain it, but he thought it possible there might be a kind of expansion of vital energies by which a person, under certain conditions, could affect a body outside his physical reach. Just as one body can touch another by the exercise of physical energies, so can it draw others towards it. But he is not yet prepared to say how that energy is exercised. That this was, he knows; how it was, he has not yet satisfied himself. But if he were to read some of the ancient books, he could easily find out. He might find that a man does not consist only of what is called the food-sheath or our physical body, but that men have other sheaths in which consciousness may work, without the limitations which are attached to the physical body. When it is working within there, it can also exercise its power, just as much as it can in the physical body, and may lift an object from one place to another by working with a law of nature in which other forces are concerned. The sheath used is what the Theosophists speak of as the "astral" body which can be utilised for the production of these phenomena and though it was said to be a fraud when Madame Blavatsky brought an article from one side of a room to another, yet nearly four years after her death you have Mr. Lodge going into the subject, and asserting after a scientifically rigid repetition of the facts that the thing could be done, thus justifying a statement as possible which had been hastily dismissed as a fraud.

I might speak of many other cases of these latest investigations, and show you how they are undermining the materialistic idea. I may turn to Hypnotism,

and remind you that last year I remarked that it was becoming a public danger—the power of influencing another, the power recognised by science, which one man had of imposing his thoughts on another. I saw that before long nations would be face to face with crimes which they would not know how to deal with. I said to you that unless the exercise of these powers were very carefully guarded, so that men who were unworthy should not be allowed to grasp these hidden powers of nature, there would be great danger to society in making safe particular classes of crime. Since last year that prophecy of mine has proved itself true, and in certain cases both in France and the United States of America, crimes were found to have been worked by the hypnotiser, and the courts have not been able to deal with them, and verdicts of acquittal have been given on the ground that the criminals were not responsible for their actions, that being thrown into the hypnotised state, they could not justly be called to account by the law for the crime which they had committed. So that you have this result justifying the ancient practice of the East in withholding dangerous knowledge of occult forces, and shewing that society in the West is face to face with the peril of men who commit crimes but who cannot be held responsible for them, because committing them under the influence of those who suggest them.

What is to be the outcome of these arguments? What is to be the outcome of these later investigations in Chemistry, electricity, thought-transference, Hypnotism, the moving of bodies and the like? To what are these new lines of investigation tending? They tend to show you that the old doctrine is true, that everything is the outcome of mind, that the

Supreme Mind is, as it were, behind every phenomenon, that matter is regulated in conformity with the dictates of mind, that it is the truth that thought-forces take form in particular manifestations, and so the Universe is only an expression of the Divine Will. And in as much as the mind generates thoughts, and in as much as the Supreme and human minds are one in their essence, therefore the mind of man, in its higher manifestations shares in the powers of the Supreme Mind, and can control matter, can move matter, can model matter, shape matter, and make itself visible in the envelope of thought, and so communicate with other minds without any attempt to speak or hear at all. So that you begin to understand that the saying of the Purāna as to creation is not a dream, but that it is from the Supreme Will that forms emanate and build the Universe. And you may understand that this power of the Supreme is more manifest in the power of the mind than in the powers of the body, and that true activity is shown not in running about from place to place, held in the bonds of physical facts, but in quiet thinking, in the use of the imagination and the will. Therefore the Yogī sitting apart, with body absolutely still, with eyes closed, and mouth not communicating with other men, if he be a Yogī indeed, a Yogī in heart not only in dress, he has an inner life a spiritual life, he may do, more than the man of action, by his thoughts, by his meditations, by the forces which are going out from him. On these more than on the work of politicians may turn the life of the nation.

Nor is this work only for the Yogī. Every one of you is sending out thoughts that, passing into the astral atmosphere, will take form, and thence affect

the lives of men and in their totality the nation's future. If only every one of you would give one brief quarter of an hour's thought each morning to the future of India, and send out earnest wishes for her welfare, hopes for her revival, aspirations for her spiritual greatness, believe me you would make a force that would raise the nation and would mould her future. Your thoughts would gather together, modelling, as it were, an ideal India that should take shape in the external world; your prayers would gather together and ascend to the Feet of Mahádeva, whence would flow forth a regenerating energy that would manifest itself in teachers, in leaders, in guides of the people, who could move the hearts of men, and unite them into one mighty Unity. Such is your power over the future, such the service you may render India; for in thought is the power of the Supreme, and it is man's because "Thou art Brahman."

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# THE PILGRIMAGE OF THE SOUL.

A LECTURE

BY

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## THE PILGRIMAGE OF THE SOUL

This evening my Brothers, I am to speak to you on "THE PILGRIMAGE OF THE SOUL" and in order that the subject may be put clearly before you from the beginning, let me, at the very outset, say what is meant by the title, what is intended by the word 'Soul', and exactly say what that word implies. One difficulty that we have in dealing with many of these complicated subjects in the English tongue, is, that that tongue is not adapted to the careful definition of subtle distinctions; you do not find in English much habit of metaphysical disquisition, you do not find in English any fondness for the drawing of distinctions which are complicated and subtle in their nature, between the different parts of man's Constitution, and as mind has been studied from without and not from within, there is difficulty in dealing with man's complicated nature, and oftentimes a single word has to serve for several things, different because of their constitution. If I were sure in addressing an Indian audience, that every one present knew as he ought to know, the terms of the Indian Religion, which mark out the different stages of man's nature, I might use the Sanskrit terminology; but I am obliged to remember, that though at the present time there are many who by tradition and by name are Hindus in faith, yet few of them are acquainted with the details of the terminology which ought to be familiar to them from childhood. I must therefore, in addressing men, who have had their thoughts turned to occidental educa-

tion rather than to the study of the ancient Indian Literature, in using Sanskrit terms be sure that the term is understood, and must give the equivalent in English, however unsatisfactory and loose that equivalent may be.

Now then, what is the meaning of this exceedingly vague word, used so vaguely by the English themselves that you will find a large number of them speak of Soul and Spirit as though the two terms were not distinct, but conveyed the same idea; so that they speak of a man's Soul and a man's Spirit almost interchangeably. If you ask what distinction they draw between Soul and Spirit, you will often be met by an expression of surprise, and the statement that the two words really mean the same thing, and that it is not necessary to go into these fine-drawn distinctions. But as a matter of fact, though they may be constantly thus used in the same sense, they ought not to be taken as implying the same. Therefore it is that I think it necessary to show what the meanings of the two terms are, in order that we may be able to follow the pilgrimage of the Soul.

The word "pilgrimage" would be altogether inapposite if I were speaking of the Spirit, Spirit being changeless, immutable, eternal, incapable of increase or diminution, and therefore a thing which can not be spoken of, as performing a pilgrimage, of which the very object is the gathering of experience and the gaining of capacities which were not in existence when the pilgrimage was begun. Therefore let me tell you that by the word "Spirit" I shall mean that which in Sanskrit would be connoted by the word *Atma*—that is, the universal spirit which is at the root of manifestation, which is one and the same for

every man, which is present not only in man but in every atom of the universe, without which there is nothing that has existence, without which nothing can be, which is that from which everything proceeds; that which is unborn and undying. But sometimes you know that a distinction in term is drawn for the sake of convenience between *Paramatma* and *Atma*; but the distinction is not one of *essence*; it is one of *condition*: *Paramatma* signifying the spirit underlying the whole of the universe; while *Atma* is that same spirit in the heart of and embodied in, man. Thus in the *Chhandogyopanishad*, there is this distinction drawn between the embodied and the unembodied *Atma*.

You use the word *Atma* when you want to make it clear that the Spirit itself is at the root of man's existence, and is, as it were, at the centre of manifestation; then you must realise clearly and definitely, that the Spirit is changeless, that in itself it is one and not many, that in itself it is immutable and not transitory. But you must also realise and consider very clearly its activity, for in the *Upanishads* it is often stated that *Atma* is the outgoing energy of everything which is born, so that while in itself it is quiescent, it has under certain conditions made all that is manifest, and under these conditions it becomes the one life issuing from different conditions according to each form of manifestation, and becoming as it were individualised by means of the conditions, although in itself individuality cannot be predicated of it.

Understand then that in using two distinctive terms, Spirit and Soul, we mean to imply difference, and having defined Spirit, what is meant by the word

Soul ? Turn for a moment in thought to that great teaching of Shri Krishna, in which he instructs his disciple Arjuna that Spirit is unborn, undying, changeless, inexhaustible, eternal; and yet in the same breath he speaks to him by name as having many times before been born, addressing him as an individual, addressing him as a separated entity, separated from other entities, distinguishing between His disciple and Himself, and saying that the former had been born many times before, but did not remember it, while He Shri Krishna knew his previous births. So that you find in that instruction the distinction drawn between the One, immutable, unborn, undying Spirit, which is one and the same for all, and separated entities who had passed through many births before, whose knowledge differed, the one from the other, whose experience in the past differed, the one from the other; so that you find individuality, you find separation, you find there an entity which can be distinguished from another entity. In every one there is some difference which has come in between the Spirit which is not individualised, and those, at least for a time, separated individualities, for they pass through different births and have garnered in them the fruits of past experience

Nor is that all. In another division of the same great book you will find a similar truth given by way of analogy, that as one sun lights all, so one Spirit illumines every form. We find one glorious sun lightening different bodies in the world, one sun but its rays falling upon many bodies around us. The sun's rays are the same in themselves, but as they fall upon different kinds of bodies in which matter is differently arranged, these rays falling upon these

different arrangements of matter are thrown back from them to the eyes of men and beautiful are the colours which result. Now colour is nothing more than a result of light falling upon the different arrangements of matter which retain some rays in the spectrum and reflect others. In looking at a tree you see the leaves are green, that is simply because light falling upon a particular arrangement of matter which you call a leaf has part of its rays absorbed by the leaf and the other part thrown inwards to the eye and the leaf has a green colour because the green ray is reflected to your eye. So with a red body, with a blue or a yellow. Thus the simile is very exact. Just as the one white light of the sun comes back in so many different colours not because the sun is different or the rays different, but because the arrangements of matter on which they fall are differently associated, and therefore the ray thrown back is only part of the white light; so in the Souls, the different Souls of men, which are individualised, the separate characteristics, the different qualifications which you see in them are built by experience, are built by the long pilgrimage of the Soul, passing through birth after birth, in each birth gathering different experiences, and these make different arrangements of Soul material, as it were, and the one Spirit shines through these individualised Souls and you see each as different; we know the individual by the difference of his attributes, the attributes being the colours of the soul.

Now when that thought is grasped, let me see the Soul's future this evening—using the word Soul as Spirit individualised that is, as an entity which begins as the "I" in us which shows certain qualities, which

exhibits certain powers; which shows strength and weakness, which grows and develops from life to life. What I have to do this evening is to trace the pilgrimage and show you the process of individualisation; to show you how the process begins, how it continues and the object for which this pilgrimage is made; what there is that comes out at the end different from what there was at the beginning; what is the goal which this individualised Spirit has ultimately to reach, for which it passes from life to life and is reborn over and over again; what is the object of the gathering of experience, what the meaning of that wheel of birth and death to which every one of us is bound and upon which every one of us is revolving, but from which liberation may be gained—aye, shall ultimately be gained, for if we are bound to that by the bonds of desire, then as the bonds of desire are broken, the Soul is set free and is no longer subject to birth and death.

Now as to Desire, as to the nature of it, much discussion has arisen, much controversy as to why the process should be, much controversy as to the beginning and the ending in times of manifestation. Let us see if we can understand the purpose of human life and throw some light on its obscurities. Come back with me to the times of old when man as we know man did not exist. In asking you to come back with me to the times when man, as we know man did not exist on the earth, when so to speak the house was building, in which there was to be a tenant that we call the Soul, let me remind you that in building a house, the walls of the house have to be built, the roof must be placed upon them before you can enter and use it as a habitation; and so with the habitation

built gradually for the Soul, we may see that house being built; we know that the bodies which we wear are not ourselves, a man's body is not himself nor is your body you. It is not you, the identity is not with the body, but the body is as a garment which you take up and lay aside at will, the garment which wears out like everything else upon this changing earth; but the Living Self, the conscious Ego is the individuality which needs the body, and uses it and takes one body after another for its purposes.

Remember always that where there is manifestation there is a double aspect of the One, form and life, remember that whenever there is a universe, or any body in a universe, both these aspects must be present; remember that they are inseparable, and that everywhere in the great and small there is the double aspect of the One, underlying life and mind. We may distinguish the one as *Purusha* and the other as *Prakriti*, both threefold in their natures. You can trace them in the building of man; you may trace them in the earlier stage of making his garment, and you will find in the *Aitareyopanishad* a very distinguishing mark where it is said that *Paramatma* drew the form of man out of the water. This is the first stage; what does it mean? Water is always the symbol under which the form-side of nature is expressed. Water is that which stands for matter in the sacred books of the world. When we find the word "water" used it means *Prakriti*, it means physical nature. The other aspect is symbolised by fire. You will see sometimes in a temple a double triangle as a symbol, the upward pointing triangle is the threefold *Purusha*; the threefold *Prakriti* being symbolised by the downward pointing triangle; the flame of fire pointing



upwards, the water dropping downwards. Fire and water, everywhere represent spirit and matter. Thus this drawing of the form of man out of the water means the building of his astral and physical bodies out of matter, and it is drawn out by *Paramatma* because the building is brooded over and caused by *Atma*. What is the next stage according to the same *Upanishad* ? It is the entering in of the *Devas*, who entered in these forms which were drawn from the water; these *Devas* entering the body become the senses of man. That is to say, that the *Devas*, who are the spiritual intelligences behind phenomena, build the inner body in which reside the active senses of man. Not the bodily organ, but the seeing sight; not the bodily organ, but the sense of hearing; not the bodily organ, but the power of speech; not the bodily organ, but the sense of touch. All these sense-centres result from the *Devas* who are concerned with the different types and kinds of perception, and who entering the form which was drawn out of the water, give to men the power of sensation, the power of feeling, of response to outer contacts. So it is written, that one entered in and became speech, another entered in and became sight, and another became hearing and so on. Thus the second stage of the building of this tabernacle for the Soul is the entering in of the *Devas*, which added to the outer bodies the inner body that feels, which added these powers of sensation, without which the instrument would not be adapted for the gathering of experience. Thus the second stage in the formation of man's tabernacle is that which in Theosophical literature is described as the building of the *Kamic* nature of man, the nature of desire, the nature which

feels, the nature which sensates, the nature which perceives pleasure and pain and thus exactly, along the same lines, you may find other great writers following these teachings of the *Upanishads*.

Take the institutes of the great teacher Manu and there you find the same distinctions made by him; first there is the "Self of the elements" that he calls the "body of action", the outer body which is made up of the elements, and next another body which he calls "the body of *Jiva*" and this is explained to mean the body of feelings. He says it is the body in which is experienced pleasure and pain; and that the body is formed for the very purpose of these experiences of pleasure and pain. So I may point out that in the *Chhandoggyopanishad* the same lines of teaching are laid down, and it is said, that *Atma* takes on a body in order that it may come into contact with pleasures and pains, for only the embodied *Atma* comes into contact with anything external to the body. And thus only can it come into contact with objects from which it experiences pleasure and pain. And then he goes on to say that where there is this embodied *Atma* there is the power of sensation, of pleasures and of pains. Therefore if you work this out, you will find that all come to the same teaching though in different forms, and that the human being consists primarily of the Universal Spirit, *Atma*, and that there is built up by this a double body, the body of action and the body of feeling, and that this is to be the dwelling place for something which is called the Soul, in order that it may perceive pain and pleasure, and by means of this gain experiences which otherwise he could not have gained. And it is elsewhere said that *Atma* is like the breeze which

plays over a garden of flowers. It does not gather the flowers, it does not pick the blossoms, but when the breeze has entered the garden and played over the fragrant blossoms, it picks up from each blossom its peculiar fragrance and carries that fragrance onwards, so that when it leaves the garden, it is enriched with the varied fragrance of the different flowers. No longer as it came in, without scent, without sweetness, but gathering up the scent of the flowers it goes on, retaining the fragrance it has garnered. And so with *Atma* in the world of manifestations. It does not gather phenomena themselves, it does not take as it were the experiences themselves, but by a subtle process it uses the bodies, the bodies of action and of feeling, for the gathering of experience, and then the Soul gathers up the fragrance, the aroma as it were, the ideal reflection of the experiences and carries them forward with it till the pilgrimage of the Soul is over.

Where is the use of the Soul? It is to be the garner house, the receptacle, in which every experience shall be kept as an ideal reflection not in the gross form of the fact or the sensation, but in an idealised form, which shall remain as a permanent representation of that which has been experienced in gaining knowledge of the external world.

And now I think we are ready for the third step. In the same *Upanishad* from which I have before quoted, the *Aitareyopanishad*, it is stated that the outer form being ready, the *Devas* having entered in, there followed the third stage, when *Paramatma* said:—"How shall I enter in?" and then it entered by the sacred place in the head, and then we may say there was Man: not before. This is the junction

of two definite lines of evolution, and at the point of junction there is the formation of the individual, the Ego. Let me see if I can make that clear. In the building of the bodies of men, in the building of the bodies of action and of feeling, you have seen a great deal of the working of the *Prakritic* side of evolution. Let me now use a term which you ought not to misunderstand—I call it the female side of Nature. You will see in a moment why I use that term drawn from experiences in the life of the world. This double evolution of *Purusha* and *Prakriti* is the primary fact, from which results on our plane what we call the male and the female. Their functions are different. The work of the one is the pouring forth of the creative and life-giving energy. It generates, it fertilises, it is active and controlling. The other side is the receptive side, the side that nourishes, the side that feeds, the side that develops, that as it were, receives the energy of the generating spirit and nurtures within its own womb the growing life which has been given to it, and makes it possible for that life to be developed. This difference of function goes through the whole of nature. All evolution is governed by this duality which gives rise to a new individual when it unites, one germinating the life incarnate, the other developing the life. That life is always thrown out by the generator, and then received by the nourisher and nourished into what is called the individual.

Now analyse this truth of nature : Brahman is one, there is but one life and one law, there is but one eternal existence of which everything is the manifestation. Therefore we can unravel many of the puzzles by studying the facts on the lower plane and

we may sometimes render it easier to grasp the higher facts, but remember that what you have to do if you would understand rightly is not to study the things of the spirit with the eyes of the flesh. You must not carnalise spirituality, but on the contrary you must spiritualise carnality, and then you may hope by the Spirit in yourself to throw light upon many problems and to find their solutions, which otherwise without its aid would be entirely unsoluble. I am now going to take an analogy from the lower nature, because I should not otherwise convey my meaning to those who are trying to understand. Analogy helps us because it gives us a picture; and all real things, all force, all life, all spirit are more easily understood by pictures than by any language. For spiritual truths are not taught by language, spiritual teaching is not by words, but as it were, by pictures recognised by direct intuition. But in as much as you and I are working through the intellect, I must use the awkward vehicle of language and therefore must ask the help of the intelligence to convey to you the thoughts which I wish to have in your minds.

Suppose you take a plant, and plucking a flower, examine its centre; in the centre you will find a small body, within that, smaller bodies; select one of these and open it, and with the help of a microscope you will find a body which is still more minute. I seem to be talking science, but I am really following the admirable ancient example of *Uddalaku*; for you may remember that father teaching his son; you may remember how he made him take the plant and examine it bit by bit until he came upon the apparently empty centre where the whole future tree was

though hidden in the invisible. So that I am only following the ancient example of teaching through physical nature, though utilising modern scientific thought. Pursuing our search microscopically we shall reach the ultimate possible point which you can trace by the present instruments and we shall find that there is a single germ—a germ which if left to itself will die, the germ if left to itself, will never develop, the germ if left to itself will just remain a small point and nothing more, will wither and come to an end. But suppose that instead of being left to itself, there is brought to it another kind of matter, stimulating and fertilising, it will live and from the male organ of the plant there will come to it that embodied energy, which falling upon the germ, will unite itself with it and fertilise it. What will be the result? The result will be that out of that germ which has been fertilised by the male energy there will grow up a new plant, there will develop a new individual, which will reproduce the characteristics of the parents that gave it birth, and it will be a separate individual, dating its beginning as an *individual* from the point of junction; separately, neither of these could give rise to the new individual, but in the union of the two the new individual is generated.

Now let us apply that analogy, and let us see how it may help us in this building of the bodies which form the human tabernacle. Now we have in those two bodies as it were, the female side of nature. Mere bodies which are capable of giving nourishment to the Soul, which are capable of feeding the Soul by the gathering of experience, which will serve as the link between the outside world and that

which is to be within; and you have in them the characteristics of the female side of nature, the nourishing side which builds up the individual.

Another building will be by the gathering of experience, without which no growth can occur, and on the assimilation of which the whole of the development of the Soul depends.

The Soul cannot be built within this receptacle that encompasses that germ, if that germ be left to its own unassisted energies. Something else must come in, in order that the germ may become a living individual, some other energy must come in to give it the impulse which shall cause future growth. Whence does it come? It comes from those Spiritual Intelligences of whom you have heard, of whom you have read, spoken of sometimes as the *Kumaras*, sometimes as the mind-born sons of *Brahma*, those who were at the beginning of the *Manvantara*, the Mighty Ones who came out at the beginning of the universe, of manifestation, to take part in this building of the universe and to generate man. The sacred books speak of such great ones and they are spoken of as men. But where will you find men like Those? They are the sons of *Prajapati* commanded to populate the globe, those who went down into the ocean, ancient and mighty sages, embodied souls, and there meditated for ten thousand years, then coming up from the waters they populated the entire globe.

Let us see the meaning of this story as applied to the building up of men. The sons of *Prajapati* beneath the surface of the waters are Spiritual Intelligences merged in *Atma* by supreme meditation; they come out from beneath the surface of the ocean, out

of *Pralaya* into active manifestation. They are the developed intelligences of a past *Manvantara* that have in a previous universe developed self-consciousness. They have developed thought. They have developed Spiritual intelligence, and it is they who come along the line of intellectual evolution, and who come down when the receptacles are ready, which have been builded for this purpose. Into the body made by the *Devas*, the body of Feeling or the *Kama Rupa*, they throw a spark, a spark of Their own essence; it is a spark of mind; it is a spark of intelligence and it falls into the prepared receptacle with its stimulating energy and coming into contact with the germ develops in the female. *Purusha* acts upon the *Prakriti* with fertilising power and generates a new individual, a new Ego, which is to develop into a new intelligent being, a Soul, that is, Spirit individualised by separate experiences. There at the point of junction it is, that the individual is born, there it is that the individual, the Soul, begins as an individual and which is thence forward to grow and to develop; there is the beginning of the pilgrimage which is to end in *Nirvana*.

Take now this thought at your leisure and in thinking it out refer, as you may wisely refer, to these various passages I have been using, in order to show to you whence the arguments are drawn; then think the matter out, slowly but with the help of the key which has been given to us in H. P. Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*, that priceless message to man, throwing light on obscure problems of our being, and you will begin to understand the meaning of the hints given and you will understand then the meaning of the phrase, that when the mind-born



sons came down, with their own essence they filled the *Kama*, some entered in, while others projected a spark. For those who entered into the prepared bodies were the great *Rishis* who in the beginning of each *Race* come upon Earth and take a body in order that they may guide the infant Humanity, may train it, give to it the revelation which is needed by it, the guidance and the impulse which are necessary for its growth. Whence do you suppose these *Rishis* come, who do you suppose are these mighty mind-born children of the highest, that they should take upon themselves human bodies and become the teachers of infant Humanity? Who generated that Humanity, who stood round its cradle, and watched its growth in order to guide it along the right way to Life? Those "entering in" they were the *Rishis*, while some projected a spark, a spark that was an infant Soul. Thus were the new men the sons of the Ancient ones, the Father-Souls; their children were infant Souls, knowing nothing, without experience, but thrown into bodies which could be trained, thrown into bodies in which they might come into contact with the outer world and translate the contact into pleasure and pain. What will be the result of the first experience? This child-soul is absolutely ignorant; ignorant of the capacities of its own body, ignorant of the existence of an outer world. That world is a world of Law. There are things outside which attract this baby-soul, things which are attractive to the sense of sight, to the sense of hearing, to all the senses of this body of feeling which is to be its instrument for coming into contact with objects and experiencing pleasure and pain. Following the attractions of things outside it, it goes after them

and coming into contact with them by means of the sense organs, it experiences pleasurable or painful sensations according to the relations between the outer body and the inner energy. Thus in the infant Soul there will arise, where there is contact, the feeling of pleasure or of pain. Do not make a mistake in your thought. Pleasure and pain are not in the Soul, pleasure and pain lie at the point of contact between the energy which the Soul is liberating and the energy from the external body, which is also vibrating; neither vibration separately causing pleasure or pain. But when the two meet, at the point of contact there is either harmony or discordance. If they are harmonious, that is translated as pleasure by the Soul; but if there is discordance, that is translated as pain. Pleasure and pain then are the results of the contact between the two sets of vibrations and are neither in the external body alone, nor in the Soul alone, that experiences the contact. Supposing this outgoing energy vibrating from the organs of the senses, comes into contact with a vibration harmonious with it, what is called a pleasurable feeling results. This will affect the Soul as a feeling of pleasure, and the Soul will desire a repetition of it and will seek that experience again. It will be a considerable time before that baby-soul relates to the external body the feeling of harmony which is called pleasure, for a long time this sensation will not result in a definite thought, for thought begins as a connexion between object and sensation, by a perception, that is, a recognition of the object as giving rise to the sensation. The first thought of that baby-soul is the recognition of a certain object as causing a certain sensation, joining together feeling with the

external body which causes the feeling. For a long time there will be sensation without perception, consciousness without recognition. Why? Because consciousness lies in the mere response to an external stimulus; but self-consciousness, the Ego, recognises relations between the external and the internal, the "not-I" and the "I" and is developed by the further process of working upon internal images, resulting from sensations and recognising the relations between these images; then passing on to what we call abstract thought, based on comparison and analysis. But our baby-soul is only gathering and acquiring experience as material for future growth; and slowly it learns what makes pleasure and what makes pain to it. Then comes its first dim perception of Law; only by these feelings of pleasure and pain will it learn there is a law; only by pleasure and pain, then it learns to keep away from somethings and to seek others, and so begins to remember and to distinguish, and these lessons of experience so slowly gathered, is the building up of the first stage of the individual.

Let me take instances to show you how slowly thought and memory grow: how slowly the vibrations of thought create the capacity for remembering, for distinguishing and for judging. Some of the lowest natives of Australia have these characteristics. If you give a man a blanket to keep out the cold at night or in the evening, he will be very glad of it, he may even buy it from you for the sake of its warmth; but in the morning when the sun has arisen, when it is warm, he will throw it away, or part with it for the merest trifle, though when again evening is closing and the cold begins he will not

part with it at all. This is because his mental development is so low, his memory is so poor, that he has little power to judge the future from the past, does not even rise to the thought that though it is warm in the day when the sun is up and the blanket is not wanted, it will again be cold at night, and the blanket will be wanted. This is because he has not developed enough memory to recognise sequence, namely, that after the warm day the cold night will succeed. Every mental capacity which you now have, has been builded up from experiences in your past life; every mental quality which you have, has been slowly made by the gathering of experiences, remembering the results of the past and applying them to the foreseeing of the future. Take another illustration. There are some Souls so young in experience that they cannot count. They can count one and two, but beyond that they cannot distinguish—one, two, many, is their reckoning, and further they cannot distinguish. Take another type which is still left upon earth, and you will find that that type can count up to ten, using the fingers as the units. See then the difference between the mental capacities of these two types and that of the brilliant university graduate who takes high honours in Mathematics. Do you not see that the capacities may be infantile in grown up men, that they develop by stages in men, up to where he is to-day; so that where you find capacity has developed, that Soul must have a long past behind it of accumulated experience, which has builded the capacity to recognise, to remember and to understand. For every capacity of the Soul which is born in the child, has behind it experiences which were gathered in previous births,

and the differences between the children of different races lie in these differences of experience making difference of capacity and are always measured by experience and by the way in which experience has been utilised. There are born in the present day some great minds which understand deep philosophical problems from the first presentation: when these are presented to them for the first time, shown to them for the first time, they seize the scope of them and retain it, for these are the men who in the past have been familiar with similar problems, and who have been trained in the habit of using their mental capacity. In such cases to quicken his lower understanding, the memories of the past come down into the brain, and there cause the physical vibrations which are concomitant with thought, and thus make the brain vibrate in unison with his memory. Consciousness is far wider than men imagine and it carries as its content things which in our waking moments we do not realise. Not only so, but much that is not realized appears as capacity, for every capacity means a grasp acquired by past practice and is really a sign of the existence of a continuing consciousness. The result of the past pilgrimage is that there are differences in the capacities dependent on the utilised experiences; the Soul is ever gathering, remembering and reasoning, judging in various ways; it makes for itself a power, and brings that power back when it takes up a fresh body, and then it uses that power, which is called inborn capacity, to further gather experience, for the further building up of itself. So you see that this process is what is going on with us now, and that which increases, develops and which you find building at the present time is the Soul.

For these processes I have been describing are not more than we can understand. It is not a fairy story, but a record of evolutionary growth, the results of which are seen in ourselves now, and that we may watch still proceeding as we improve our mental and moral capacity by practice. Why should we find one thing that is easy and another that is difficult? Why should we be in the world in these capacities, with weaknesses, with strength, with thoughts of evil and of good? Why this tendency towards evil? Those things which in the past we thought, we are bringing into action to-day. Our *Karma* is, that that which in the past we have built shall limit us in the present, and that we shall experience the results which we ourselves have caused. For my mental capacity, which comes from my past, is the result of my use of past experiences. Suppose that in my past a great spiritual truth was given to me; suppose that in the past I turned aside from it and took up in preference some intellectual knowledge or sensual gratification. I thus lost the opportunity of mastering spiritual teaching. What then will be the result, the *Karma*, in the future? That having lost that opportunity of gaining spiritual knowledge, I shall be reborn without the capacity that otherwise I should have had and when it comes in my way in this life, I shall be unable to take it, unable to understand it, dead to it, blind to this the wonderful vision, because I turned aside from it in the past, because I had not utilised the opportunity of learning, but rather travelled away from it. Therefore it shall be my *Karma* that I shall fail to recognise it, and presently that which I preferred to it, the transitory good, the good which is reality in no good because of its transi-

toriness, and I shall not have the power of knowing the spiritual while I shall have lost the taste for the material. So you see how *Karma* works. It does make limitations, the Soul must work in this world by the capacities it has made, and hence the mind may not allow the expression "the workings of the Soul". It is also true that the living Soul, that from the past has brought its capacity and incapacity for work and duty, when it finds itself hemmed in by the *Karma* it has made, may yet slowly work through those limits, wear them away, for it has the all-prevailing power of *Brahman*, which is at the root of man, which is individualised as Soul, and which gives to him the power of initiative, the power of will, the power of thought. And if in my life to-day, the same opportunity comes to me, the opportunity that the Soul had previously missed, and I have made it a daily habit to check every single material desire, to keep down all physical longings in order that spirituality may manifest itself then I may overcome materialism; then I may be able to grasp it, though feebly, and in any case I am building up *Karma* for my future, I am building up a capacity which my Soul shall have to use in the life which lies in front. For capacity is like a vessel into which water may be poured, and if when water is brought we have no vessel in which to receive it, it will be carried on and we left athirst; so must we make capacity as a vessel in which to receive the water of the Spirit, so that when the Spirit comes, when the spiritual water comes, we may have the capacity to receive. The smaller our vessel for its reception the less can we take, and hence the importance of improving to the utmost our capacity.

This then is the object of the pilgrimage of the Soul—to gather knowledge, to gather experience, to gain the capacity to gather, so that at last it may be a Divine Soul, all-wise, all-loving, and it shall reach the stage in which were those mind-born sons who generated the baby-soul to go through the long pilgrimage which I have been describing so shortly. For the result is that at the end of the pilgrimage you have a Divine Soul which is filled with knowledge. You all have the capacity to thus rise towards the Divine, unfolding the inner life and these outer experiences, and so at last becoming those great Spiritual Intelligences which in a future *Manavantara* will generate a new group of human Souls, bringing back with them the experiences they have gathered in the present, and utilising them in the building of another experience. There is the point towards which Souls are tending. Did it never strike you to ask whence came the Mind-born Sons, whence these mighty *Rishis* who made our India possible? They came experienced into manifestation—whence did they come? They came from the far-off past, from ancient *Manavantarās*, they came as the harvest of past universes to provide the seeds of the present. They came for the building of the new Universe, of the new Humanity, for those who to-day are making the pilgrimage of the Soul, and rising out of material into spiritual life. The *Rishis* by the long pilgrimage I have described, trodden in a past inconceivably remote, have through their union with the One Supreme, carried on the ideal forms resulting from their experience, and bringing these out of the invisible they use them for the making of a universe, more wonderful and more full of growth than the last.



That then is the pilgrimage of the Soul. There is the vista that opens out before us. The higher states of consciousness we cannot at present understand, not having experienced them, we cannot appreciate them, for we cannot realise that what we call individuality may expand into a more real life, for we are where there is separation and not unity, where there is difference and not identity. Just even a little transcending of brain-consciousness shows possibilities beyond this universe of ours as known by average men. There is intelligence, there is consciousness which no word of mine can describe, into which the brain-intellect cannot enter, union with the one, the marvellous supreme Being, unintelligible to the lower mind. The idea with which I leave you today is that in this life of yours you may choose to come upwards or to go downwards; that if you go on grasping at the physical, if you go on seeking only the material, whether for yourselves or for the building of this country, then you will be dragged backwards, downwards, by the thoughts you build into the Soul. You may raise or pull down, you may build or destroy, you may construct or disintegrate: in your hands is the choice; yours to make or unmake. But remember that what you choose you must take. There is no escape from this inevitable law. According to the will is the result. According to the thought is the act. As you desire so will Nature answer, and nothing else will come. Therefore lay the foundations of your future in obedience to the words you will find in an ancient Scripture:—"Man is the creature of reflection, as he thinks, so he becomes : therefore reflect upon *Brahman*."

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# THE USE OF EVIL

A LECTURE

BY

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## THE USE OF EVIL

MY BROTHERS :— I am to speak to you this evening on a problem which has tasked the intellect of man for thousands and thousands of years and which is still discussed to-day, as though it had never been considered before, with as much energy and eagerness and with as much interest. That it remains unsolved still is shewn by the continuance of the discussion and by this unwearied turning to it of the mind of man. Man seems instinctively to imagine that this problem is one which would teach lessons of value and importance, if it could be understood, and that behind the "Mystery of Evil" there is hidden some priceless truth.

I do not pretend that I am going to solve this immemorial problem, but I hope to lay before you certain considerations which may throw light upon it, if you apply yourselves to thinking over them. And in order that you may carry them more easily in your minds I divide the subject under four heads :

1. The Origin of Evil.
2. The Relativity of Evil.
3. The Use of Evil.
4. The Ending of Evil.

Under these four heads I hope to shew you that evil is a necessary part of manifestation, a necessary condition of manifestation, and originates with manifestation. That also it does not exist absolutely, in and by itself, but is relative, relative in that it exists

in relations between things and not in the things themselves, and also because it varies with time, with succession of events, and with the progress of the universe. Then I hope to shew you the purposes it subserves, the uses it fulfils, and lastly how we may escape from it, how we may, by the use of evil, break the bonds that tie us to the wheel of birth and death; how although living in the world, we may live in it without generating Karma, and so, to use a well known phrase, may burn up Karma in the fire of Knowledge. Following these divisions under which I shall arrange the details, I may be able to give to your minds, the minds of the rising and educated youth of India, ideas that may be worthy of your consideration, in order that you may not simply listen for an hour, but taking them at leisure, may have materials to work upon after you have left this hall.

Now let us consider the origin of evil. Realise, to begin with, that no universe can come into manifestation at all, that no manifestation can occur, that no multiplicity can become, that no diversity can appear, unless there be limitation. That is the first point that I wish to make clear to your minds. The one existence, spoken of sometimes as *Brahman*, that existence is absolute and undivided; no attributes are there, no qualities are there. There is unity, no diversity; there is unity, no multiplicity. It is "the One without a second." So that, when for a moment you try even to think this Existence, in the very thinking by which you must separate yourself from It, by which you as a mind endeavour to consider something which is thought of and is not the thinker, by that very effort of thought you introduce duality into that which you are trying to realise as unity;

and when there is separation between the thinker and thought, which is implied in the effort, there is diversity,—not Brahman as One in whom there is no duality, in whom there is no separated Being, in whom there is neither thinker nor thought. Thought implies perception and an object of perception; but Brahman is absolute unity, absolute identity. We speak of thought where thought cannot exist. It is unconditioned, therefore unintelligible; unconditioned, therefore without limitation. And therefore, truly is it written, *That* is neither conscious nor unconscious—albeit there is some deeper essence which when conditioned becomes consciousness, because consciousness implies duality, consciousness implies something which is conscious, and something of which it is conscious. That is, at least duality is implied the very moment the word consciousness is used, so that in that absolute unity, where there is identity and not diversity, where there is but the secondless *One*, there is no possibility of thinking, because there is absence of conditions, there is absence of limitation. But the very moment the universe has, as it were, to come into being, then there must be conditions, there must be limitation. Limitation is a condition of manifestation, for the very moment you arrive at the point of manifestation, a circumference must be drawn from the central point, the circle of a universe; without that, thought is lost in the absolute one-ness, the identity. Within that circle thought may be exercised, and the very word “manifestation” implies at once this limitation. Manifestation, by a law of mind, at once implies its antithesis, the absence of manifestation. To anything which you may think, comes the opposite, for the opposite is implied in the



very act of defining. "A" implies "not-A." Therefore we are compelled to formulate "absence of manifestation," and yet cannot truly be said to think it. But, as I have just said, manifestation must imply limitation. There is limitation in the very existence of a universe; it is conditioned, and as soon as you think of the matter you at once begin to understand that a universe implies limitation, and that only by a process of limitation can a universe come into being; conditions self-imposed within the Infinite One-ness that can be recognised as the boundary that limits thought. Well, when that is thought and understood, the next step is very simple. Having diversity, having limitation, there is at once imperfection implied. The perfect is unlimited; the limited, imperfect. So imperfection must be the result of limitation. In the totality you may find perfection; in the whole, but not in the parts. The very moment you have parts, multiplicity, various bodies; each body separately considered is imperfect, because it is less than the whole. The very fact that it is a part proves that it is imperfect; a fragment cannot be perfect; only the whole can have perfection predicated of it. So that we have here the second step. The first is the fact of manifestation implying limitation, and thus limitation making a diversity of objects; the second is that separate bodies must be imperfect, in that each is less than the whole of which only perfection can be declared.

Notice now the links of the argument. Notice that the very fact of a universe implies this imperfection; that if you object to imperfection you must object to manifestation. If you object to limitation, you must object to there being anything which can

be thought of, of which consciousness can be predicated, anything save that absolute unity, utterly incomprehensible to thought. So that we have this solid ground to start from, that the existence itself of the universe by the very fact of limitation, implies imperfection in the limited, and that every object being necessarily limited, is also necessarily imperfect, being less than the whole. Now when that is realised, you have your origin of imperfection, of what is called evil. Thus imperfection is co-eternal with the universe. Limited, imperfection is a necessary condition, so that whenever there comes a universe into existence, imperfection must come into existence at the same time. The fact of manifestation is the origin of imperfection.

But when we go on to deal with what is called evil, we find something more in our thoughts than this necessary imperfection of separated bodies; although the essence of imperfection is in the very existence of the universe, that which we call evil lies in the degree of imperfection, and in its relation to the rest. But in the very words "good and evil" relativity is fundamentally implied, the "pairs of opposites" necessary to thought; the word "good" is not fairly to be predicated of any thing until the idea of evil is recognized—the "not-good;" for good and evil are correlative terms, and the one can only be distinguished as being the opposite of the other which is implicitly present in the mind at the same time. It is a fundamental law of mind that thought must work by difference, discriminating the difference, technically, between "A" and "not-A"; "A" representing the individual thing which is thought of, and "not-A" everything else which is excluded

from that individual thing, so that if you say "good" you separate the good from that from which it is distinguished,—the "not-good": and without this separation no idea of good can be present in the mind, for we realize "good" only by contrast with that which is "not good" and which is distinguished from it. In the absence of that distinguishment there would be nothing which we could call "good". "Good" and "not good" then, are a pair of opposites. and one is only possible by the existence of the other. Similarly you may take another pair of opposites. Compare light with darkness. Light would have no meaning to you in thought if it were not for darkness or no-light. Light is only cognizable by thought because of no-light. Light-giving bodies can be recognized in thought, because all bodies do not give light; and this is so much the case that the presence of non-light-giving bodies is necessary for realisation of light. Astronomers tell us, startling as seems the statement, that the depths of space are dark, not light, although they are full of the vibrations of the ether which on the earth we recognize as light. Why? Because there are vast spaces of the mighty universe where there are no light-reflecting bodies, themselves non-luminous; and in the absence of these dark ones light cannot be thrown back, reflected; hence space which is full of the vibrations of ether is absolutely dark, because of the absence of those bodies which are the reflectors of light, themselves being dark.

Take still further an extension of the same thought. Evil does not exist in and by itself, as we may judge from the phenomena around us; evil like good, lies in the relationship between one thing and another; it is

relative, not absolute. What we speak of as evil in one place may be not evil in another; for evolution implies this changing character, and what is good at one stage may be evil at another. Presently I will take certain things which we say are evil, and shew you that the evil does not reside in the things but in the relationships between them and certain other things, and that it is in the relationship alone that what we call evil resides. Let me take an illustration to shew you what I mean. You may have a violently vibrating body, vibrating without touching any other body; vibrating inwards and outwards, which would do no harm, which would cause no pain, and the result of that active motion of the body would not be anything which you would recognise as evil. But place in contact with that violently vibrating body another body, and it will produce what we call a pleasure or a pain—that is if the second body has got the power of response, the power of answering to that which is outside, and of feeling the vibration to which it answers. By coming into contact with the body which is violently vibrating, and by receiving the blow, what we call the sensation of pain might arise. Now pain is regarded as part of the evil of the universe; pain is regarded as one of those things which are the results of what is called evil. But as a matter of fact, pain is the result of contact between two things which separately are innocuous, and arises from the inter-relation of those things which in their separate aspects are not individually pain-producing, but only imperfect, each by itself. When coming into relation with each other, they, as it were, work against each other, then there comes out what we regard as evil, and the nature of the

result will depend upon the relation between the two, not even upon the inherent imperfections of each that I spoke of, but on their relations to each other.

Now that leads me to point out to you that as evolution proceeds, that which we call evil must necessarily be developed more and more. As evolution proceeds, the result of the evolution is to bring into conscious existence higher and higher types of organizations, higher and higher types of living things, which enter into more and more complicated relationships with others which surround them, and in these organizations there is developed more and more of this power of response. There is developed also the memory of response; there is developed not only memory but the power of placing things side by side, that is of comparison, and then of considering the results of the comparison, and drawing therefrom volitions. And then there is the experience gradually gathered which illumines the developing consciousness, enables it to recognize certain things as things found to be against progress, to be against the higher evolution, certain things which retard evolution, certain things which check it, which tend to bring about disintegration instead of higher integration. Now what means evolution? It is merely the building together of higher and more complicated organizations that express with ever greater and greater perfection the Life that is Divine, the Life that in the universe is seeking manifestation. When we speak of manifestations as higher or lower, we really mean that they express more or less of the Divine. We call them higher and lower merely as they manifest qualities, which tend towards the lessening of separateness and the developing of unity, that

is which lead away from the pole of matter and lead towards the pole of Spirit. The grosser side of manifestations of the One Life is that which we describe as matter. Now there are two poles in manifestation the form side or that of matter on the one hand, and the life side or that of Spirit on the other. They are the two opposite aspects of the one Eternal Life, and the process of evolution consists in that life in its dual aspects going outwards to cause diversity, and when the limit of diversity is reached, drawing inwards to reintegrate the diverse separated units into a mighty and enriched unity. The outward-going life seeks diversity and may be said therefore to tend to the pole of matter; the inward-going life seeks unity, and may be said therefore to tend to the pole of Spirit. Here is a truth that the thoughtful should ponder over. If we take good to mean all that is working in harmony with the Great Law, and evil to mean all that is working against it, then qualities now regarded, and rightly regarded, as evil—selfishness, desire for material gain &c—would have been good during the “descent into matter”, as only by these could diversity be obtained, whereas now they are evil as retarding the process of integration, as checking the inward-flowing tide of life towards the pole of Spirit. Thus again we realise the relativity of evil, and understand that a quality which at one time was good, as subserving the progress of the universe, becomes, evil when it should have been left behind in the sweep of evolution, and when persisting into a stage higher than that to which it belonged, it retards the progress which once it had accelerated.

Evolution, on its returning path, is unfolding

the life-side of nature, and is making, as it were, matter more and more plastic, more and more delicate, more and more complicated in its organization, until by its very complexity its equilibrium is so unstable that it takes very easily shapes of various kinds under impulses from within and becomes a mere graceful garment in which life is expressed, until, finally, matter, is nothing more than the subtle from which expresses life by limiting it, and it changes form with every impulse from the life, and takes on new shapes with the different impulses of the out-going and in-coming life; and this is evolution. When man begins to understand what evolution means, he then regards everything which helps towards evolution as being on the lines of harmony with the purposes of the universe, and therefore with being now on the side of greater and greater integration, of the building together of a complicated unity. Then he names "good" all that works in that direction, and calls "evil" all the tendencies which persist from the stage of evolution in which greater diversity was sought. Realising that evolution is now the process of building together the separated objects into a perfect unity, he calls "good" everything which tends directly to harmony, which tends towards aggregation, which tends towards the unfolding of the higher unity, which tends towards the expression of the Divine life, with ever increasing and increasing perfection; and he calls "evil" every thing which checks that aggregation and which introduces the earlier forms into the present and retards the passing on to what is relatively perfect and relatively higher.

Now suppose we carried that thought out, what

would we find ? We should find that that which, in the past caused evolution and was not evil, becomes evil, when it persists in the evolution of the higher organization and so retards its growth. For instance in the mineral Kingdom you have minerals and stones hurled about by some volcanic eruption; you see that eruption, with its shivering of certain bodies, with its tremendous evolution of gases, accompanied by explosions, and then with the rebound of the separate materials making a desert where before was a fertile plain, and you say : "See, this is evil." Yet wiser minds, on the contrary, regard it as part of the regenerative processes of nature by which, by disintegration and collision, new combinations are rendered possible, the face of the earth is changed, mountain ranges are thrown up, rivers and channels are created, and by means of this violent destructive agency, new continents are built, homes for higher forms of life are rendered possible in the course of the evolution. Let us pause for a moment and contemplate the way in which a continent is builded. Let us watch the tremendous action of those volcanic forces, and at one place see a mountain range flung up; then let us watch the formation of mighty glaciers, great masses of ice, and see them presently begin to grind their way down the mountain side into the plain which lies below; see their resistless course, ploughing out their way, and listen as they go on, smashing, grinding, shivering, tossing up masses which fall again rebounding; watch the processes of that world of struggle, of strife, of noise, of disturbance, of difficulty, and see the marshalling of those energies which seem to be working for ruin and for nothing else. But as centuries go on, and



still you are watching, you find that where there was a grinding glacier, there is now a new channel, a channel which has been dug out of the mountain side, and through the plains, by its giant action and as you watch you find water collecting in this channel, and gradually, more and more flowing into it, until where there was the destructive action of the ice, there is a great river full of life-giving water; and as the water flows down through the plain vegetation springs up on the banks, and great cities are building, food can be grown for keeping up the life of man, trees are growing luxuriantly, and human homes are seen, and happiness on every side. But what would have been man's lot without that previous evolution? We can see that unless the disturbing agency had had full sway in these earlier growths of life, you would never have had the later; so you can not call that evil. There is nothing evil in itself, for these are simple destructive and attractive forces at work, and the Being who is the source of all life, the great One, the Lord, is known sometimes as the Destroyer and sometimes as the Regenerator, for until the lower is destroyed the higher cannot be born, and every death is but the lower aspect of a higher birth.

But if we turn to man, to those who have been gradually evolved, those human beings who have begun to reason, who have begun to remember, to compare and therefore to judge and to understand—when amongst them there appears a disturbing agency, which lies at the root of all the angry passions of man, then man having evolved to a stage at which the infliction of pain on others is against his evolution towards the Divine Love, we call that in-

fiction of pain a "Crime". Why for instance do we call a murder an evil act? We call it an evil because the murderer is there reverting to a previous stage in evolution that he ought to have outgrown; as a man he should have evolved towards a higher life of harmony, but he is giving way to an inclination which will bring about the retardation of growth, and which at the stage which he has reached is harmful. At the point of evolution he should have reached, he ought to be one of the forces evolving towards the Divine Harmony and not one of the forces which are retarding that evolution, and rendering it slower of accomplishment.

I am going to deal with the use of this retarding agency. Let us take now a man who begins to understand that in the sphere of thought and action he can place himself either upon the side of progress or upon the side of retardation; who realises his place in the universe, who realises true working of nature, and who may deliberately set himself either on the side of the evolving life, or upon the side of the forces which are retarding evolution, which are holding it back, which are against progress, which are not in harmony with it. Such a man has to choose with which side he shall identify himself. He may choose to identify himself with the side which is progressing on to the gods or he may choose to identify himself with the side which is retarding that evolution. His choice is in his own hands. He must realise that if he chooses the side which retards evolution he has chosen destruction, by identifying himself with the disintegrating agency; whereas if he chooses harmony with evolving life, he has chosen continuation, because he has identified himself with

that which is the law of progress, and the fact of his identification with that law will give to him the permanence which results from harmony. You may say, why should identification with the retarding forces lead to destruction? The answer is this: because the Divine Life going on and causing evolution returns to unity, and everything which harmonises with its mighty course is carried onwards without waste of energy; whereas everything which sets itself against it, and causes friction and retardation, wears itself out by the very friction which it causes. It is one of the laws of motion that a moving body continues to move if not opposed, but if friction is generated by its coming into contact with another body it will gradually come to a stand still; wherever there is friction, there is this expenditure of energy, and this friction transmutes moving energy into another form, such as heat, and the energy is dissipated; continued friction causes the dissipation of the form which is subject to it. It is not that the energy is annihilated; it is not that the energy is destroyed; that cannot be. It is that the form is destroyed; which comes into contact with that in which the opposite force is manifested. The form perishes, because the opposition breaks it into pieces or rather, it breaks itself into pieces, against the opposing force, but the energy persists because it is part of one eternal life. But you may say, why this retarding force? Why should there be in evolution this action of retardation? Why should there be in evolution something which opposes? How can it come? If every thing is from the One, how can it develop? First, because the condition of any diversity is the manifestation of the opposing poles of Spirit and

matter, of light and darkness, that I spoke of in the beginning; and secondly because for the development of all positive qualities, it is necessary that they should be exercised against opposition. Without opposition no development is possible; without opposition no growth is possible. All growth and development result from the exercise of energy against something which opposes. Think for a moment and you will see how true this statement is. You have muscles in your arms; if you want to develop the strength of the muscles, how are you to do it? By exercising them, by stimulating them, not by keeping them still. You know there are some people who practice a particular form of asceticism, who extend the arm and keep it rigid, so that muscular contraction cannot take place. What is the result? After a time, the arm becomes fixed in that position, it becomes rigid, the muscles lose the power of contraction; they are no longer the channels of living energy; in fact, there is stagnation, absence of effort, absence of muscular contraction, of pulling against resistant forces; the result is to throw the arm backwards, as it were, into a lower form of living thing, to which motion as a whole does not belong, and the arm becomes as rigid as a stone or a piece of wood; it has lost the muscular power for want of exercise, because it has remained quiet and stagnant, and therefore the power of motion has disappeared. But if a man wants to develop his muscles, what does he do? He takes a club which has weight, he takes a dumb-bell which has weight, he takes any object which has weight, and then sets muscle against weight and pulls against it, whirls it round, but always puts the muscle against the opposing force in the weight.

He lifts it from the ground; and the weight tries to drag him down and he tries to drag it up. The effect of this conflict is the development of muscular energy, the development of force in the muscle. Muscularity is drawn out and developed by working against the opposing weight; it becomes stronger and becomes able to overcome opposing forces and so the muscle grows and develops the more, the more it is exercised, and becomes more powerful than before. This development arises entirely because it has been used in opposing weight and by exercise has overcome the opposition; from this it has gathered life and strength, for as the muscle increases its capacity for holding life, life flows into it, and ever the strength we can draw from the surrounding Divine life is limited only by our capacity to receive and hold.

*There is the use of evil.* The life that is in you cannot manifest its higher capacities unless you are placed under conditions in which you can develop yourselves by struggling against opposition. Evil is, as it were, the weight opposing the muscle, and as you develop the body by struggling against the opposing external weight, so do you develop the moral character by struggling against evil which is the opposite of every virtue. Every virtue has its opposite evil. Truth and falsehood, courage and cowardice, compassion and hatred, humility and pride. All these things are pairs of opposites. How can you develop truth save by struggling against the false, save by realising that in the world around you there is falsehood on every side of you? What can you do when you realise the force of this, save contradict it and place yourself in opposition to it, and yourself be true? Never let a false word escape

your lips; never let a false thought find habitation in your brain, never let a false action disfigure your conduct and the result of the recognition of falsehood will be to develop in you the necessary power for truth. As you struggle against the tendency to falseness, there is developed in you the increasing power to be true. Now what is Truth? Truth is Brahman: Truth is life: Truth is the essence of what we call the Divine life; and we reach it by struggling against falsehood, developing as it were, the virtue which is the receptacle of the Divine life, and as you enlarge it and increase it by your struggling against falsehood—as the muscle grows larger by practice against the weight—you are making your character a receptacle for the Divine Life, that Divine Life which shall flow in, in ever-increasing volume and give you greater power. Thus you are developing those qualities of Truth which without opposition, you could never have evolved and which, in proportion to the energies evolved by your efforts against falsehood, will purify your nature from falsity, and render true the life which you are developing. So also with every other virtue. Courage is developed in the presence, not in the absence, of an object which you fear. If there were no objects which gave rise to the sensation of fear, then courage could never be evolved. But the presence of these objects that give the sensation of fear increases the experience of the Soul and gradually evolves courage. Have you ever noticed in an infant, that that which at first was terrifying to it, that which was an object of terror to it when first seen, gradually loses its terrifying quality as it becomes more and more familiar? See how timid a little child is; see how he sees even in a

strange face, an object which terrifies him. How shall that child lose that timidity and become brave in the face of men? Not by shutting him up in a room where he will never see anybody. If you keep him in a room where there is no strange face the child has no fear. Fear is generated by letting him face unknown objects, and presently he begins to understand them, until out of constant experiences fear is eliminated, and strength and courage take its place.

And so I might take virtue after virtue to shew that they grow only in the face of opposition, and that in the result of these opposing forces lies the value of this retarding energy : *there* is the value of the evolution of evil which acts as a weight against the effort towards perfection and thereby develops the strength which checks the desire for these forms which are doomed to destruction; for the men who choose to ally themselves with that which is doomed to destruction, must share the fate of those forms they have selected for their own. But the energy which is necessary for evolution towards the condition of perfection would be absent without evil, and the presence of evil in the universe makes it possible for good to grow and for perfection to triumph.

Nor must we forget as a fundamental use of evil the evolution of the power to discriminate between good and evil, and thus of volition, of choice. How should we distinguish Truth save by discerning it as different from that which is not true? How should we learn its value if we did not find from experience the destructive effects of falsehood, in man and in society. "A" is only brought into consciousness by the presence of "not-A" and the latter is necessary

to the definition of the former in the mind. So our mind would remain a blank as regards Truth, we could not realise it, cognize, it define it, save as distinguishing it by its differences from not-Truth. And so with each virtue, with good in its totality. Only by recognition of evil can we know good. And to recognition of evil, experience of evil is necessary.

Useful also is evil as a scourge that drives us to good. For as evil is discordance with the evolving forces of the Divine Life in manifestation, it must result in pain. Pain verily is discordant vibration. Therefore evil inevitably brings suffering as a result, not by an arbitrary penalty but by an inherent necessity. And suffering gives rise to a feeling of repulsion towards the cause of suffering, and so drives man away from the side of nature which inharmoniously and tumultuously is plunging into disintegration, and carrying with it the personalities who elect to identify themselves therewith. In the mighty stream of Divine Life that circles as a universe all men are carried along; but one current whirls downwards all monstrous and disorderly growths, that they may be disintegrated into the rough materials for a new building, while the other current carries onwards all that are moulding themselves into orderly expressions and that by making themselves vehicles of the Law share its permanence as an essential manifestation of the One Reality. I said, when dealing with pain, that I would show you how evil can be got rid of; I also said that I would show you how it was possible that this evil which we see around us and recognise as evil, might gradually lose over us its retarding power as the God in us evolves outwardly and fills us with strength. Remember that the line,



along which I have been leading you will enable you to look with understanding and therefore with absolute charity on all the forms of evil which surround you; you will see in them inevitable imperfections; if you see the human Soul struggling in corruption and in evil, you will not feel anger nor intolerance, nor hatred, but you will know that this Soul, just because of the evil with which it is struggling, will gradually gain strength and become triumphant over it. So that at last you will understand how the Divine is in everything, in good as in evil, that Shri Krishna is the vice of the gambler as well as the purity of the righteous, and our universe will become full of hope; for you will recognise that the whole is working towards perfection, and that good and evil are the two forces which co-operate to liberate the Soul, the one by drawing it upwards, the other by shattering everything to which it clings and which is not God. But the point to which I wish to lead you is that as you gradually recognise these facts you will see that the aim of the individual self is to become perfectly at one with the inward going stream of Divine Life: this is the beginning of understanding, the beginning of the realization of the meaning of the universe, and you will begin to utilise what seems to be evil in order that you may get rid of everything which binds you down to the transitory side of nature, and so take pain as a real helper. Pain is said to be an evil. Pain is not pleasant, but it is not an evil; it is desirable and not undesirable, for it is a condition of gaining perfection, and without it perfection cannot be. And why? For this reason; that development must become conscious, that is, there must be a gradual development of thought

within us. But by what process can this be secured ? When we go outward towards an object which attracts us we at first seek only satisfaction. But in the external there is no permanent satisfaction; in the external which attracts the deluded Soul of man there is nothing that can give permanent satisfaction to the Soul. The Soul has been compared to a charioteer, standing in the chariot of the body, and using the mind as the reins to curb the horses of the senses; when the galloping horses of the senses carry the soul away to the objects of desire, how shall the Soul learn that these objects are not truly desirable ? How shall it lose the desire which goes out to these things which can never satisfy ? And how shall it learn to turn inward to the centre, and seek for Brahman alone ? It can only be led to turn towards its desires, when it finds that everything which is not Brahman passes away, and in the passing away gives pain. You desire the gratification of the senses. How shall that desire be eliminated ? Only by discovering that the pleasure they yield is very transitory, that if it is followed too far it brings about disgust and suffering and pain, and that therefore the freedom and the wisdom of man lie in getting rid of the desire for sense-pleasures, if having been attracted by the sensation of taste because it is pleasant, we find that to gratify it to the utmost brings disgust, then we begin to see that it will be wiser to choose an object which has more permanence than the gratification of taste. Then the root of desire is pulled up and can send out these lower shoots no more. But you can never convince men that this is so unless they have tried the following of the objects of the lower desires and have found the results which flow from them.

Argument would not do it, reasoning would not do it, but when men have had the experience, when men have gratified their taste to the full, when they have become gluttonous, presently they will find that they have made their bodies miserable, their lives one long suffering, that diseases result from the gratification they have experienced, that the gratification brings *pain* as a result; then they will no longer desire to gratify themselves in that way, and the root of desire will be cut away; or rather the process of cutting it away will have begun, for the process is a long one. And that is the only way desire can be finally extirpated. You can only get rid of it by gradually realising through experience the knowledge that the gratification of all desire which is not going upwards is a womb of pain and brings forth woe as a child. Nothing but this experience can get rid of desire; not by outward compulsion but inward will must the destruction of desire take place, and this is wrought by pain. Hence is pain, miscalled an evil, one of the greatest blessings bestowed upon man, in order to turn him from the transitory and fix him upon the eternal; for only by pain can he possibly learn, only out of disgust with the world will arise those inward aspirations which shall at last be gratified in the vision of *Truth Divine*.

Do not misunderstand me, for misunderstanding on this matter is very easy but very dangerous. The stage of the full gratification of desire that I have been speaking of is the stage of the Soul's childhood, ere yet the memory of the Soul recalling past suffering following on gratification, translates itself as the voice of conscience, and means the lower nature of the peril of yielding to desire. When once experi-

ence has been sufficient to bring about such warning from the Soul, then it is madness to disregard it and gratify desire in its despite. Full gratification of desire belongs to the stage where the outer attraction is yielded to without a pause, without a doubt, without a question, and is followed by no regret, by no shame, by no remorse. The rising of any question in the mind as to the propriety or the wisdom of gratifying the desire, shews that the memory of the Soul contains a record of suffering following on similar gratification in the past; otherwise no question could arise. If the man yields, against the warning, the pain of remorse will be added to the pain of satiety, and thus only progressive lessons are learned; until at last he realises that his wisdom lies in refusing to purchase future pain by temporary pleasure. And then he begins to starve out the desires by refusal to feed them, while by dwelling on the pains that gratification brings he cuts at their root with the axe of knowledge, wrought out of experience. All average men, all but the lowest and most brutish, have reached the stage when the voice of conscience is heard, and should therefore begin to consciously co-operate with the upward tendency out of the mire of materiality into the spiritual life.

How then can we break our bonds? The real answer is suggested in that law which I have been shewing to you. The bonds are broken by these inevitable experiences which life after life teach the Soul the nature of the universe into which it has come. But desire is a binding force, and as long as there is desire so long must men come back to birth. The desire for good will draw it back as well as the desire for evil, the desire for religious

happiness will draw it back, as well as the desire for earthly joys; the desire for the praise of men, for love, for knowledge even. A Soul may desire results of a high and noble character; still there is a desire for results, and this must bind it to places where the results are to be found. Therefore in order to get rid of *Karma* we must get rid of *desire*. Not cease from action—that is unnecessary, but act without desire—making every effort which is necessary, yet indifferent to the result. This is the familiar lesson given by Shri Krishna, this the essence of all truth. It is renunciation of desire, not of action, which makes the real Sannyasi, which makes the renunciator, which makes the Yogi, a *real* Yogi—not one only in the wearing of yellow garments and ashes—but a Yogi who has broken all the bonds of desire, and not simply one who is an outward renunciator. For the man of action who performs every action because it is his duty, and remains indifferent to the fruits thereof, that man in the world is the servant of God; he is one who performs every action,—not for what it brings him but because it fills up something lacking which ought to be done in the world in which he lives as an agent of God. A man who realises that the wheel of life must turn, and who takes part in the turning of the wheel, not for what the turning of the wheel may bring to him, but in order that the Divine life may circle in its course,—he plays his part in working without attachment, without desire, and turns the wheel whether it brings him pleasure or pain, whether it brings him praise or blame, fame or ignominy, Divine knowledge or ignorance—anything the wheel may bring him. He only perceives that it is his duty to co-operate with God

while manifestation persists and he therefore identifies himself with the God from Whom the turning of the wheel proceeds. He is then *one* with Sri Krishna who declared that He had nothing to obtain in Heavens or on earth, but that if He stopped acting all would stop. And therefore the devotee who acts, not in order that he may get anything but in order that the Divine purpose may be fulfilled, he works by way of sacrifice; he offers all his actions as sacrifices to God and remains indifferent to the fruits of the sacrifice, for they lie at the feet of God and not in the heart of the devotee. Such a man makes no *Karma*, for such a man has no *desire*; such a man creates no links which bind him to earth, such a man is spiritually free, although around him actions may spring up on every side. Thus is it when a man is born into the sphere of knowledge; thus is it when a man is born into the sphere of devotion; and the life of such a man is as an altar, and burning upon that altar is the flame of devotion and of knowledge. Every action is cast into the fire and is consumed therein, rising up as the smoke of a sacrifice and leaving behind on the altar nothing save the fuel of knowledge and the fire of love.

Such then imperfectly sketched—for the subject is too vast—are the lines along which you may study the ancient problem, and which may make more clear to you the reason why pain and imperfection exist: we have seen that evil originates in limitation, we have seen that evil is a but relative thing, and how what we call evil is often only a veil of evil and beneath it a future good. We have seen how actions of men, when they are developed become evil, which in a lower organization would not at all be evil; how

as man proceeds onward and onward, he can use evil for his own perfecting; how man tries to escape from pain and to pursue pleasure; how desire remains in his heart, and brings him back to earth, and he goes forward and forward, purifying desire, identifying himself with the Divine Actor in the universe; then how no further actions have binding force upon him; how such a man is free from evil, and free from all those bonds which tie the Souls of men; and finally how he becomes an altar from which the smoke of sacrifice goes up continually to the Eternal. This indeed the life which alone is worth the living, this indeed the road along which lies peace and calm. This is realised by the true Yogi alone. Compare this with the life of the man who clings to the world full of dissatisfaction, full of discontent. Look at the men and women around you; look at their faces; see how they are full of anxiety and of desire, of trouble and injustice; and see how men's hearts are pierced by pain and laid desolate by catastrophies, by miseries, by hopes and by fears; how they are tossed about and flung from side to side, and too often brought to ruin !

And then realise that Brahman is bliss. Bliss, but how ? Bliss, because there is unity; bliss, because there is an absence of desire; bliss, because there is knowledge of permanence, which nothing that is transient can disturb. So shall the despairing human Soul find hope, if it is fixed on *Brahman*; so shall the disturbed human Soul find peace. Who can deny that to the Soul that knows its source, that has found the Self ? Thou art *Brahman*. There is nothing which can shake that; there is nothing which can undo that; there is nothing which can change that.

It is fixed indissolubly upon the changeless, upon the Eternal Truth. It has nothing in it of earth, that it should ever pass away. The body is not the Soul; disease may mar it, accident may injure it, death may strike it away, but the Soul remains unchanged. The lower mind you may destroy, but there is no real loss; changed may be the individual circumstances, but the "I" is changeless. Separation between bodies may come, but the inner unity remains unbroken and so any outer change must fail to drive to misery or to despair. Such a Soul stands as a rock in the midst of warring, surging billows. The waves of misfortune boil up around it, they may dash up against it, but only to be shattered into foam against its sides, and fall in snowy wreaths to decorate its base, and thus render it more beautiful than it was before. So is it with the Soul which identifies itself with the One; so is it with the Soul which by knowledge and devotion has removed everything which is fleeting, and has founded itself on that which is Divine. That is the goal; the goal which may be reached by you all, and the reaching of that goal is the USE OF EVIL IN THE UNIVERSE.



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# THE MEANS OF INDIA'S REGENERATION.

A LECTURE

BY

ANNIE BESANT.

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## THE MEANS OF INDIA'S REGENERATION.

This afternoon, my Brothers, I will try to lay before you that which many people would say is the most practical of the subjects on which I have been speaking during the last week. "The means of India's regeneration" naturally suggests the idea of a proposal of some definite kind, a proposal on certain lines which may be adopted, which may reach the national mind, encourage national aspirations, and which may enable this ancient people again to hold their place among the nations of the world. I am going to try to suggest to you this afternoon certain definite lines, which are not only completely in harmony with the ancient thought of India but are wholly inspired by the ideals which I have been striving to place before you during the last week. While, in fact, the existence of this ideal in the heart of the people is necessary in order to make them possible, they are yet, to some extent, the lines of action which may be taken by all those who work upon the physical plane, and may thus afford an outlet for their energies in dealing with the facts around them. In order that reforms may be in any sense successful, it is necessary that the ideal of which I have been speaking so much, may both be true and be accepted throughout the length and breadth of the

country; that the people should regard it as desirable. In order that the actions of Indians may be properly guided and may be inspired to activity, not only does it need to be taught as an ideal from the platform, to be taught as an ideal through the press, but also that those who accept it should act up to it in their daily lives; that they should make it the subject of deliberation and collective thought, for *that thought* is after all the greatest force. The body is mutable, it changes; but a man's thoughts are potent, and his actions are moulded by the thoughts with which they come into contact, so that every person by thinking of that which he desires to accomplish, has really laboured for its accomplishment even more actively than those who are engaged in the outer work; for in every reform which is brought about, this agency of thought is above all things most necessary. By thinking definitely of what we desire to accomplish, we touch as it were, the very springs of action, and improvement must inevitably result. Those who are neither speakers nor writers, those who are not much able to influence their fellow-men by any personal argument, by any personal attempt, they may still bring their thoughts to bear on India by a sustained and deliberate effort, by wishes for India's regeneration, and then these thoughts joining together upon the thought-plane shall in due time come out into action on the external plane, and every person who takes up action shall be strengthened and inspired and made more and more likely to succeed by those thoughts which are behind him and around him and which thus find expression upon the outward plane of deed.

Realising then that the ideal which I have put

before you is a spiritual one, that above all, the spiritual greatness of India is the first point to be considered, everything else flowing from that,—let us see by what means that may be called “practical” we can direct the stream of Indian energy into certain definite channels,—channels every one of which shall be directed to a single point, and in which we may set pouring together the various streams that are to work national regeneration. Now those of you who look at the Indian Society of to-day, must see as a result of their observations, that there is a continually increasing pressure put upon two especially of the ways in which educated men must gain their livelihood. The profession of the law and that of the civil service are becoming more and more over-crowded. These are the only two avenues of livelihood for which young men are educated, where they show the higher intellectual faculties. So that you will find the ablest men, the men of action, the men of intellect, in these professions, and the most promising boys, who are the men of intellect of the future, are being continually passed either into the civil service under the government, or into the profession of law,—these being the two which are the best paid of all the professions, the professions in which intelligence and will are most likely to bring the largest natural results. Now it is idle to quarrel with the tendency of an ordinary man to seek to employ his energies in the way that brings him what he regards as the best return; you may honour the self-sacrifice as noble, that gives itself to an ideal which brings no reward in the form of wealth, but you still must needs reckon with the mere man of the world who seeks the things of the world. So that the question

arises how are these energies to be directed, especially if regard is to be had to the common good, so that the various capacities of able men may co-operate towards the general advancement, having in view the object proposed—the helping of India—and also the due employment of individuals in a remunerative way. If you realise that these two means of livelihood are becoming over-crowded, then will come the question:—“Is it possible to find some other means of using the national capacity, which at one and the same time shall not only offer an opening for those who desire to be really useful to the country, but shall also afford support to men whose gifts are not so high, but who are willing to devote themselves to forms of professional employment which will give them a reasonable and fair return for their labours, and enable them to keep themselves and their families in a respectable position in society?”

Now clearly there is one form of employment available in India if we could really form a public opinion strongly in favour of it; a form of employment which along one line would give work of the most vital importance to be done by some of the most spiritually-minded and intellectual men in the country, and which in its several branches would offer a reasonable means of livelihood not only to these but also to men of average intellectual capacity, and would at the same time stimulate certain of the trades of the country as it spreads, and so would actually benefit those different classes of the community, and benefit them ever more as it spreads more widely and more deeply. Now this special scheme is that which will include every branch of activity concerned with the spreading of Sanskrit learning,

in all the many directions which are possible, not only by helping the learned men employed as advanced teachers and writers but which also would help large numbers of subordinate teachers, and would link the Indian peoples more closely into one.

Of course the first part of this scheme would necessarily be an attempt to found, in one centre after another in the country, Sanskrit Colleges where the teaching of Sanskrit would be in the hands of learned men *essentially* of the *Pandit* type, as opposed rather for the moment to that of the ordinary professors—I mean the men who look upon Sanskrit as a sacred study and who bring to it real enthusiasm and real devotion, as well as the idea of teaching it as a profession. Now it is true that a few such colleges do already exist in this country, but they ought to be very largely increased in number; that increase could be easily brought about if a public opinion could be formed, sufficiently strong, which made a knowledge of Sanskrit a real necessity, so that no man would be regarded as an educated man unless a knowledge of the Sanskrit tongue formed part of his education. Those who deal at all with the question of education will be aware that *all* those who regard it thoughtfully, as a training of the powers of man—not as a mere cramming with facts—take up certain types of study as necessary for the cultivation of the higher intellectual faculties. It is not the question of training a young man so that he should learn just exactly those things, and no others, that he can turn into opportunities for wealth-gathering in after life; the object of education is to turn out a man whose faculties shall have been trained carefully in various directions, so that he shall have acquired delicacy

of thought, the power of sustained attention, the habit of mental culture, which makes all the difference between an educated and an uneducated man, and which is absolutely necessary for the advancement of the race if intellectual advancement is to form a basis for future Spiritual development.

Now glance for a moment at the West, and see the changes that are going on there. For hundreds of years in the West the cultivation of the classics, Greek and Latin, was regarded as absolutely necessary for what was called the education of a gentleman, and men who were ignorant of the classics were regarded as *uneducated*; I do not mean they had to be scholars of the comparatively small class who gave the whole of their time to literary pursuits—I am speaking of the men who had no pretensions at all to stand before the world as scholars i. e. as *pandits*, of the ordinary nobles and middle-class gentry, as they were called; the whole of these as a matter of course were trained in the knowledge of Greek and Latin, and no man could take any high position in the country, unless he possessed these essentials of a gentleman's education—a fair knowledge of the classics. For such a knowledge was always expected in ordinary discussions among men, and this training of the intellect gave a certain definite strength and refinement of thought, and what was called culture implied always a knowledge of these languages and of the great literature found in them; and only by *such* cultivation men could be trained to rigour and delicacy of thought, and refinement and polish of expression, and therefore it was a part of every gentleman's education, and was not confined to the literary class alone. Now in England, under the stress of the struggle for ex-



istence, these languages are every day more and more falling out of general education, and you will find amongst the thoughtful people of the country the complaint that these young men who are now being "educated" are by no means such cultured or educated men as were always found in past generations; that they picked up a mere smattering of knowledge, just enough to enable them to pass their examinations, and which they forgot as soon as the examination was over. So that society becomes more and more frivolous and less and less thoughtful, and you get numbers of people with only average mental capacity who have little chance of ever improving it to the very best advantage because of the loss of this higher mental culture.

Now the same is true of India, only with this difference, that whereas in European countries they have used Latin and Greek as the instruments of culture, you have your own ancient language which lies at the root of your vernaculars, a knowledge of which opens out to you the grandest literature the world has yet produced. A knowledge of that literature should be incumbent upon every man who claims to be educated, on every man who hopes to hold intelligent converse with his fellows; it is needed not only by *pandits*, not only by teachers, not only by writers, but by every man who claims to have intelligence *at all*, who wishes it to be exercised for the sake of possessing intellectual knowledge, and not merely for the fact that knowledge may be sold for so much money. For mind you, this is a question of vital importance in the development of the race. Unless you develop the mental faculties, you cannot rise amongst the nations of the world. If your mental faculties are only direct-

ed to subjects which enable you to keep yourselves alive, then you strike at the very root of the development of your nation, and you must sink lower and lower amongst the peoples of the world. For the average intelligence is what you have to regard from the standpoint of the nation. And in order that men may be competent to meet the needs of this country it is requisite that they should have a knowledge of Sanskrit in order to encourage the opening out of its literature, and for spreading the knowledge of what was thought by the ancient men of this country among the people at large; so that the people shall look back to the past, and gain from that past, knowledge and experience. And by the pride which grows up in the human heart in feeling itself linked with a mighty past, all that is sympathetic in the past shall become capable of working in a future and impress on that future something of the Spiritual greatness which that past has shown. Now it is clear that if it should be demanded in India that young men, taking them as a class, should be trained in this knowledge of Sanskrit, you would immediately have a demand for teachers far above anything which at present obtains and you would increase, by thousands upon thousands, the number of those who desire to learn in order that they may follow teaching as a profession and thus would increase your teaching class enormously, to meet the demands of the multiplying numbers of pupils. And so you will train up large numbers of men who will not only find their means of livelihood at once, but also their pleasure, in teaching, knowing that by their teaching they were strengthening the National spirit, and pointing the way to the union between all cultured

intelligences over the whole surface of the land. For be you sure that a common language is something more than a mere convenience; it is a tie which binds heart to heart, mind to mind. You have the choice of two languages which might, either of them, form the common language of India. The vernaculars are different; men of one province cannot hold converse with men of another because of this difference of language which keeps them apart, more or less as strangers to each other. What is happening? At the present time the common language amongst the educated classes is a foreign tongue. The common language of the educated Bengali and the educated Madras is English, and this is really becoming the common tongue of India; the men of the different provinces converse in this language and use it for inter-communication, all being separated by their different vernaculars. But would it not tend far more to national feeling if you had as your common language the mother of these vernaculars? Would it not tend to more national feeling if intelligent men should naturally and readily converse in the language of the ancient books, and find themselves on one common ground, as it were, of a common mother tongue? You should not undervalue the effect of the communications which make men feel the tie of a common kindred, which make men feel as brothers instead of men of different races. You should use the language now common to the *Pandits* of all the different Indian races—Sanskrit—you should use it as a bond to bind the different races into one, so that nations conscious of a common descent should feel a desire for common work, for common co-operation at the present time. Nor is

that all. The *Pandit* at the present time is educating his son not to follow his own profession but to follow that of the law or the civil service; he does not bring up his son to his own profession, knowing that that may mean for him starvation. But as this demand for a knowledge of Sanskrit increases, as I have said, larger and larger will become the number of those desiring teaching; and then *Pandit* after *Pandit* may educate his son to acquire the deeper knowledge which is necessary for the teacher, knowing that from it will come a reasonable source of livelihood, a definite and certain profession by which he may live in the land.

Nor again is that all. The colleges which will be founded should have two great characteristics. First, they should be endowed for the support of the teachers attached to the colleges, that is, the teachers should not have to depend for their support upon the payments made by the pupils. For it is an honorable and ancient rule of Sanskrit teaching that the pupils should be taught without fees, any innovation on this ought to be resisted if you wish to keep up the revived ancient feelings; you should not introduce the modern method of fees, which is being protested against even in the West. The teaching to students must be free. Instruction should not be withheld because the boy is unable to pay a fee for being taught, and if some pay and some do not you introduce a vulgar money distinction between the pupils. Every son of India who desires to know the ancient tongue should find teaching open to him without the necessity for payment, as it was in the ancient days; and not only so, but there ought to be provision made for the maintenance of the students, so that they may be

able to pursue their studies without any anxiety, and may be able to learn in order to be fitted to teach afterwards what they have learnt. The colleges should further not only be thus endowed sufficiently for the maintenance of *Pandits* and pupils, but also sufficient endowment should be made for providing an income for those who, being endowed with special ability to serve the Nation in this department, should be rendered able to employ their talents to build up a modern Sanskrit literature, not wholly unworthy of the literature of the past; that is, that there should be foundations which should support learned *Pandits* who would thus be enabled to give the whole of their time, of their talents, of their thoughts, not only to comment upon the ancient books but also to write original works which would be more and more in demand as the knowledge of Sanskrit spreads. So that you would have a class of writers, composed of some of the most brilliant brains amongst you, men who feel themselves able to influence their fellows with their pens, men who would find a way open to them to revive the past glories of the mother-land, without being subjected to starvation, or obliged to make sacrifices which only come from the noblest, and therefore only from the few. So that in this way you would be building up a foundation for teachers, a foundation for pupils a foundation for writers, and as the pupils grew into men, a general demand would arise for a wider circulation of the ancient literature, and thus would also be benefited the trades concerned with the printing, binding, and selling of books. This demand for Sanskrit literature would grow enormous, for it would be prized by the cultivated classes that would be evolved by this

system of education. So that not only those who will be educated would benefit, but you will also have a vast increase of activity which would give employment to great numbers of people in the production of books ; and in this way you would find, as in the West, great classes of laborers and of distributors who are wanted along these lines of activity and who would supply the demands of the cultivated classes which will have been brought into very active existence by the method above sketched.

But of course the question naturally arises:—“How is this to be brought about from the pecuniary point of view ?” The chief appeals should certainly be made to the wealthy Rajahs of the country, who have vast sums of money under their control, and who may well be appealed to to spend some of it at least in introducing and helping on the scheme. There are some men with enormous accumulations of wealth; there are others with wealth which they waste to a very considerable extent, but who may be stimulated, from a sense of national duty, to give money to found such colleges, which would rise as their permanent memorials, for the well-being of the Indian people. Surely this would be a more glorious employment for their funds than in the mere show or in the raising of useless kinds of memorials; if a man wants to perpetuate his name, if he has a desire that his name should go down to posterity, how should such a man do more wisely than by founding a great educational endowment, which shall go on century after century as a source of help to the Nation ? Far more glorious would be such a memorial than the empty memorial of a statue or a monument merely left behind, without any thought of duty to the nation in the future and

without any thought of the welfare of the Indian people. Nor is that all. If you can form a public opinion of that kind, if you can induce some of the wealthy Princes to aid in such a national movement, I have little doubt that you would obtain support from and the movement would be helped by the supreme Government; and I have still less doubt that such a movement, if it were really supported by public opinion, and had the weight of the educated Indian community behind it, would receive at least the respectful consideration of the Government that rules the nation, so that some help might come from that Government as a tribute to a national movement which ought to be encouraged by the English Government which is ruling over the land. For if you take the Government as a whole, it has a desire to do justice and it has a desire to meet the wishes of the people over whom it rules; and such a movement as this, a really national movement, could not and would not be neglected. And this would also bring you the support of those ambitious wealthy Indians, who will help nothing that is not looked on with favourable eyes by the rulers of the day.

There is just another point I wish to put to you about Sanskrit. At the present time some of the greatest treasures of Sanskrit learning are going to England for translation, to be translated by Englishmen, by Orientalists who take an interest in these works, but who have no belief in their deeper meanings, who do not share in the religious faith which inspired them, who do not share the philosophic views which they embody, who have no sympathy with the national traditions, and therefore who will never give the spirit of the originals, however accu-

rately, however grammatically, they may translate them. I myself, with my limited experience, know of more than one priceless untranslated work which has been taken over to England to pass into the hands of English Orientalists for translation. Why? Because no one could be found here to do it. One work has been thus taken over lately to England to be translated and issued at a cost of £ 800, and this after a fruitless search of many months for a translator here. I ask you whether it would not be better that members of the Hindu religion should translate these Hindu religious books themselves; whether you think it creditable that they should be sent to the West for translation by men who do not share your beliefs and have no sympathy whatsoever with your religion? Is it likely that translations of this kind can be true to the spirit of the originals? Is it likely that the delicate points, the shades of thought will ever be truly caught? Is it likely that with the aid of a grammar and dictionary, a mere comparison of book with book, that the meanings of deep religious books will be faithfully rendered, that there will be understanding of the subtle distinctions in belief, only to be found in the hearts of men who are at one with the religion itself, and are contained in the true meaning of these books? Therefore you want to build up a class in India, educated in Sanskrit and also in English, who will be able not only to give the *spirit* of the original Sanskrit, from their knowledge of the very delicate shades of thought of the Hindu religion, but who also possessing a sound knowledge of English, will be able to give the most accurate equivalents of the terms and not simply give the dictionary English meanings which now



disfigure the translations. So that you need to have men who shall at once be masters of the Sanskrit and masters of the English tongue to translate the treasures of this ancient literature, which are now being continually sent for translation to the western world. But mind you, this desire to know the treasures of the Eastern thought is beginning to grow in the West; this desire to *know* the philosophy of India, to understand its subtleties, to realise something of its complexities of thought, is a growing demand at the present time, and you have many priceless works, which need to be translated, in order to elicit the meaning of the books which are already in an English form. A book, for instance, like the Bhagavad Gita has a very wide circulation in its English dress. Would it not be then well to circulate some of the commentaries, as for instance that of Sri Sankarāchārya? Would it not be then well to have an English translation of it published, so that the thoughts of the great Hindu teacher may be made known, which should throw some light upon its contents?

And further, in this way you raise your nation. In this way again, in time, India will rule the world; when this is done, India will be able to challenge the judgment of the educated world, and with one voice it will pronounce for the supremacy of her literature, as every one has done who has acquainted himself with it; for there is no dissentient voice amongst Sanskrit-knowing Western people; they all are of one mind as regards the value of Sanskrit literature, however much and variously they may disagree about special books; there is but one opinion as to its profundity and grandeur; and this opinion is

spreading in the West, that all things spiritual come from the East. Do you suppose that when this is more widely recognised, it will not react here, that the regard and respect and admiration of the West paid to your splendid literature, will not avail to raise you as a people in the eyes of the world, by the homage of intelligent men gathered from every nation ?

Supposing then, that this Sanskrit revival takes place, and there are signs of it already, then you must remember that you need to do something for the younger boys who are entering the gates of learning, to prepare them for this higher education. Now the great thing to do with boys in primary schools is to inspire them with enthusiasm for the motherland, by choosing carefully the kind of books which are placed in their hands for study. First of all, you ought to encourage a study of the vernaculars that are based on the Sanskrit, and should preserve their type; for in the case of the Northern Hindûs, their languages are derived entirely from the Sanskrit. But what is happening to-day to these vernaculars ? More and more there is a change working; you have a vernacular, Hindi, which ought to be Hindu, becoming full of foreign terms, to the diminution of words taken from the Sanskrit. So that it is becoming less and less a Hindu language, and more and more a foreign tongue, associated with meanings and words drawn from Arabic and Persian sources. More and more the vernacular which is based upon the Sanskrit is being pushed aside and forgotten by the people, thus denationalising them still further and separating them from their most cherished and ancient traditions.

Now in regard to this question of books and teaching. The teaching in every school, to which Hindu boys are sent for purposes of study ought to be based upon the Sâstras, so training the boys in the knowledge which is to guide their path in life. They should be taught the ways of Aryan morality, they should be taught the stern and rigid sense of duty, which should pervade all their character; they should be taught the meanings which are expressed in symbolism, so that whenever they are challenged in the world, they may be able to justify their own faith intellectually, by explaining it; morally, by showing purity, uprightness and blamelessness of life; and spiritually, by living *openly* a life which aspires to the life hereafter : thus becoming Hindus in the truest and fullest sense of the word.

Then with regard to secular learning. I saw the other day in looking over some books in a school, that they were English school books, and as I was turning over the pages, I found that though the books would have been suitable for boys in an English school, they were remarkably inadequate for the boys of an Indian one. For the information on geography, productions, natural objects, &c., which was given about India, was absolutely out of all proportion in comparison with the information given about European nations. Now if you take a primary book in an English School you will find that it deals mainly with England : its history, geography, products, industries, trades, and so on. But here the boys are taught much about England; and very little are they taught about their own country. The book gives a Hindu boy details of English towns—now what is the use of that knowledge to him ? And he

is left without any knowledge of the detailed history and geography and products and industries of his own country, where the whole of his life is to be spent, and to which his thoughts should ever be turned. The foundation of an intelligent knowledge of his own country should primarily be laid in every boy's mind, and the knowledge of other lands later, when that about his own has been mastered. Press upon the educational department the use of books relating more to India and the peoples of India, which shall give their history at greater length and the history of other nations more briefly. The history and geography of India should be soundly taught, and the acquiring of a wider knowledge may be left to those who have the time and inclination to pass on to higher schools. It is but just that the poor Indian boys should learn the history of their own land, rather than that of lands with which they will have nothing to do in the course of their lives. I have seen a boy give quickly the name of the capital of Switzerland, and hunt confusedly in the South of India for Kashmir. What sort of a national education is that? Try to change it and make a public opinion which will call for this change as regards their work of primary education.

Thus, passing on, now rouse the boys to enthusiasm and pride by the history of Ancient India; tell them of that. Tell them how India was really great, cultured, full of piety; tell them all the wonderful tales which are to be found in the ancient literature, tales enforcing the noblest morality; so that they may grow up thinking of India with pride and devotion, and longing to do their share in serving the nation, because the nation is worthy of all

sacrifice and service. Enthusiasm in the young is easily aroused ; teach them what will fire their hearts ; for the young are touched and moved easily by noble ideals, and if you give them anything to touch their hearts, if you give them anything to move their enthusiasm, if you familiarise them with the past history of their own country, if you wake their devotion to their national faith, the time will come when they will turn away from the west to the motherland. And these boys, grown into men, shall be bound with every bond that can link the Indian to his home, and from such men will come the salvation of India.

Pass from this ideal of education, which might breathe through India the breath of a new life, to another line of work, which is one of serious importance to a caste on the regeneration of which depends much of the hope of India's regeneration. It would be well to establish throughout the country organizations such as those which are actually at work in the Punjab, for helping and training the sons of Brāhman in sacred learning and in the intelligent discharge of religious rites. The organizations are called, "Brāhman Sabhās," and the objects are stated to be :—"To encourage the Brāhman to learn 'Sanskrit,' '*Dasā Karma Vidhi*,' '*Sanskāra Vidhi*' and to endeavour to ameliorate the condition of the Brāhmanical religion." Every member is bound to learn Sanskrit, to regularly perform the daily rites of "*Nitya Kurma*," and the ceremony of the investiture with the sacred thread, strictly in accordance with the *Sāstras* at the proper age, with the proper rites. Each Sabhā should have a School, attached to it for teaching

Sanskrit, the daily rites, and "*Sanskāra paddhati*" to the sons of Brāhman; a committee of *pandits* should examine the school annually, and grant certificates to the students who pass. Only those Brāhman should be permitted to officiate at religious ceremonies who hold these certificates and none others. Other important rules run :

"Each Brāhman shall be bound to teach Sanskrit to his children "

"The Brāhman acting as priests shall be bound to perform the required ceremonies strictly according to the Sāstras and with sincere devotion, even if the *yajman* be poor and unable to spend much money "

"If the *Yajman* be a Brāhman, and do not desire to have the religious ceremonies performed with a sincere faith, the priest shall decline to officiate, and on his refusal no other Brāhman shall officiate for him"

"Students from the city, or outside, who are poor and have no means of support, shall be fed and taught by the Institution."

Such Sabhās would do very useful work by encouraging well-instructed priests, and also by putting an end to the exactions of disputing priests, especially at places of pilgrimage where many scandalous things occur from time to time from the sheer greed of gain. Information about the Sabhās may be obtained from Rai B. K. Laheri, Ludhiana, Punjab.

Useful also are the Sabhās for Hindu boys and students, started by Col. Olcott, President of the Theosophical Society, and now multiplying rapidly through the country. They are designed to give Hindu boys the strength that comes through association, throughout the period of school and college life, a period so dangerous to their religious faith under present conditions. The boys bind themselves to speak the truth, live chastely, and perform their

religious duties according to the *sâstras*. The Sabhâs are united into a Hindu Boys' Association, founded at the end of 1894, which issues a boys' journal monthly. Information about this can be obtained from the Secretary of the Theosophical Society, Benares.

Those who, like myself, desire the maintenance of the Caste-system, in its ancient four-fold order, would do well to consider the advisability of getting rid of some of those restrictions which are indefensible on any ground of reason or religion, and which interpose rigid barriers between members of the same Caste, preventing intermarriage and so on. Sri Sankarâchârya, the successor of the great Teacher of that name and the present head of the Sringeri Matha, has already declared himself in favour of marriages between members of the same great Caste, who are separated only by the artificial walls of subdivisions. Such a reform would greatly strengthen the Caste-system against its assailants, and it therefore deserves thoughtful consideration.

The next point is the building up of the entire Indian nation, by the encouragement of national feeling, by maintaining the traditional dress, ways of living and so on, by promoting Indian arts and manufactures, by giving preference to Indian products over foreign. Now this is a point which really goes to the very root of Indian revival. Do not undervalue the importance of sentiment, and do not try to do away with everything which differentiates India from other lands; rather strive to maintain the immemorial customs and follow the immemorial traditions, instead of trying to look as little Hindus as possible, as many of you are inclined to do. It is true, of course, that

that these are outside matters, but they have a very real effect on the generation and maintenance of national feeling. Take clothing and habits of life. There is no question that the Indian dress is the most suitable for the climate, it is healthy, it is beautiful; why then give it up? I know it cannot be worn while a man is engaged in certain vocations and that he is compelled to wear English clothes while working in offices where the dress of Western nations is compulsory. Now that is a thing which you cannot help; but what you can help is the not carrying on of these foreign clothes into private life; the westernising of dress in the home as well as in the law-courts, in the home as well as in the office. This is not only folly, but a mistake as well. If Englishmen out here were wise they would adopt the Indian dress, instead of which we have Indians adopting the English dress at a possible risk to health. The Western man has to face a severer climate, and to bear a severer cold. In the Indian dress it would be utterly impossible to live in England, for men would simply die of the cold. But here, the wearing of it is simply absurd. There is nothing whatsoever to be said in favour of it, for it is absolutely ugly. If Englishmen would go back two hundred years and use the dress then worn, there would then at least be an artistic defence, for the dress then worn was beautiful, as compared with the peculiarly hideous clothing now worn, and which seems so much to attract the average young Indian mind. Now the matter is not simply a matter of sentiment; it is really a matter of health, of convenience and of economy; for the Indian dress is suited to the Indian climate, not only because it is light, but also because its material can go through



water daily, and so is far more suitable to a hot country than the cloth coat and trousers which are worn unwashed over and over again. Considered as a mere question of hygiene in a hot climate, clothes which come into daily contact with water are eminently desirable. There is no reason, no common sense, which should make the Indian lay it aside, when the experience of thousands of years has shewn it to be the best kind of dress for India. But it is not only that. The inner feeling and outer expression often go together, and he who westernises his outside attire is very likely to grow western *inside* as well, and therefore instead of strengthening he really tends to weaken his motherland. Then again the question of economy comes in. Clothing which fifty years ago cost very little, is now a serious drain upon the purse. Then, dress was simple, dignified without being costly, save among the wealthy and the ruling classes. Ordinarily it was a simple dress, which did not make any marked distinction between the rich and the poor in the *same* caste, and was suited to the wants of the people. Suppose a man was learned but poor, he was not looked down upon for his simple dress, but in his pure white clothing, he could make his way into every wealthy house in the land. Dress was not then, as it is to-day, a question of social appreciation; and the increase in expenditure upon it means a heavy addition to the already large burden on many families, in the ever-increasing struggle and competition brought into Eastern life by the adoption of Western methods. Again to the ordinary Hindu this westernising process means a far greater demand upon him in other matters than that of clothing; for not only does it mean a change of

dress, but it also means an increase in the number of meals, a change in their character, increase of wants in furniture, and so on, until if you work it out, you will find that it means a greatly increased cost of living.

See the benefits I told you of yesterday, of simplicity of life. I did not mean asceticism by that. I did not mean to say that men of the world should lead the life of asceticism. I did not mean to say that men should live as *Yogis* in jungles or under trees, but I did mean that they should lead a national a simple life with all the noble characteristics of the ancient times; that their houses should have the old simplicity and not be crowded over with a multiplicity of things of foreign manufacture.

And this leads me to the next point; namely, that it is the bounden duty of every patriotic Indian to encourage Indian art, Indian manufactures and Indian labour; and not to go across the seas to bring here endless manufactured articles, but to give work to his own people. Let all encourage Indian manufactures and arts, and use Indian made goods in India. Indian art has gained a name all over the world because of its beauty and artistic finish, and why should men who have such art on their own soil, why should they go and buy the shoddy productions of Birmingham and Manchester, why should they cast aside the labour of their own countrymen, why should they purchase foreign goods instead of home-made, and encourage bad art instead of good? There is really no excuse for leaving Indian National Art to perish, for this is an important thing in a nation's well-being, and especially the encouragement of all those forms of art which depend upon the

delicacy of the human faculty, refine the people at large and increase the material progress of the nation. Why, if you take some of the foreign manufactured goods and compare them with the Indian, what do you see? You find, that in the Indian, the colours are most delicately graduated and blended giving an exquisite softness of shading to the Indian carpet, and this is the result of generations of physical training in the sense of colour; while in the carpet of foreign manufacture, it is harsh and crude, and there is no need to print upon it, "manufactured in Germany" for you have only to look at its colouring to know it is not Indian. You are therefore injuring your own beautiful national art by using inferior goods of foreign make, and extinguishing Indian trade by continuing to encourage foreign goods, to the impoverishment of India and to the throwing of Indians out of employment. Look also at the large prices the people in England are ready to pay for Indian art objects. I urge you therefore to support your own labourers, thus strengthening your manufactures and arts, and laying a sound material foundation for national wealth. The strengthening and developing of these Indian industries is the work to which *vaishyas* should devote themselves, for that is the work essentially belonging to their caste, on which of old the material welfare of the nation hung. You would also have coming to you constant demands from foreigners who purchase Indian goods because of their beauty. And we must press upon wealthy men that instead of sending to England to buy costly furniture, they should spend their money at home in encouraging the arts which are around them in their motherland, so that a public opinion

may be formed which would cry "shame" upon a Prince or Rajah, who filled his palace with foreign articles instead of having them produced in his own country, so that his wealth should add to the comfort and happiness of the people and strengthen the national prosperity. These would awaken a sense of nationality, filtering down from the higher to the lower, regenerating the nation, and striking its roots deep down into the physical lives of the people, uniting all India, binding all India together closer and closer and closer, till her oneness is realized, till Indians recognize in themselves a people. See in the *Rámáyana* how all the arts and handicrafts flourished, and how prosperity and happiness abounded among the people on every side, for the masses need physical comfort; they are not developed to the point of finding wealth in *thought*. These ideas should appeal to your reason and claim your judgment, for they are practical lines of working out a material regeneration, and deal with those concerns which the people at large can understand. The growing poverty of India is a matter you must reckon with, for you are already feeling the pressure of the struggle for existence, and that pressure must increase if you continue to feed its causes.

But remember that these physical means of regeneration cannot succeed unless they flow down as the lowest manifestations of the spiritual ideal that I have been setting before you, for they all have as aim the unifying of India, and that unifying must be founded on and permeated by a spiritual life, recognised as the supreme good, as the highest goal. Every thing else is to subserve that, no matter how much material prosperity and wealth are needed for the

encouragement of weak and undeveloped Souls.

There is one other matter on which I must touch—the unification of religions, which can be done nowhere if it be impossible here. The glory of ancient Hinduism was its all-embracing character, its holding up of the perfect ideal, and yet its generous inclusion of all shades of thought. Under that wide tolerance, philosophies and religious sects grew up and lived in amity side by side, and all phases of thought are found represented in the different Indian Schools and the numerous Indian sects. This gives to Hinduism a unique position among the religions of the world. Therefore an effort should be made to draw into amicable relationship the religious bodies that went out from Hinduism, and have become oblivious of, or hostile to, the root whence they sprang. The Zoroastrians—the modern Parsis—have a noble and philosophical religion, holding the essential truths of all spiritual religion. This religion has become sadly materialised, and its adherents, in too many cases, have no idea of the deep meaning that underlies the ceremonies they so ignorantly perform. Alas! this materialising process has affected the masses in all religions; more the reason that the fundamental unity should be proclaimed by those who see spiritual truths, and that the daughters who have married into other families should not utterly forget their mother's home but should recognise their descent and let love replace hatred.

And so with Buddhism. This also is a daughter of Hinduism, but at present the estrangement is too sharp, and has been caused very largely by misunderstandings. In the Buddhism of Tibet and China the ancient traditions have been preserved, and the Hindu

gods and goddesses are worshipped under other names—sometimes even under the same names. *Mantras* are used, *Japa* is performed, many religious rites are the same. And in the great philosophical system, but little known, which is expounded in the *Abhidhamma* (I am told), there is found the metaphysics and the spiritual profundity so deficient in popular Buddhism. Nor is it lacking on the esoteric, the occult, side; in the definite training of the Soul in Yoga. And the Siddhis are acquired by the Buddhist ascetic as by the Hindu. No division exists in that inner region. Why should it not be recognised that the Hindu social system—which is the chief point of difference—while invaluable as a type to the world, and to be maintained and cherished by all true Hindus, is not suitable to many other nations, and that religious intolerance is no part of Hinduism. A true Hindu nation in its fourfold order would be the Brahman of Humanity, the spiritual Teacher, the channel of Divine Life to the world. But other castes as well as the Brahman are necessary in a nation, and other social forms as well as the Hindu are necessary in the world. If India could be regenerated, if India could be purified, if India could be re-spiritualised, then the nation as a whole, with her spiritual faculties, her intellectual powers, her ideally perfect social organization, would stand forth in the eyes of the world as the priest-people of Humanity, standing before the gods in her collective capacity, fitted to be their mouth piece to the world. That is the destiny to which India was appointed, when she was peopled by the first men of the Fifth Race, and her religion and her social system were founded by the Rishis that she might serve as the model for

that Race. Shall she ever again so serve? Shall she ever again rise from her present degradation, and fulfil the sublime charge laid in her hands? Who may pierce the darkness of the future? Who may read the scroll of destiny? This alone is sure, that no *other* future may be for her; that it is either this or death; and that it lies wholly with her children to give back to Humanity the India which may be the Saviour of Spirituality to the world.

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# THE MASTERS AS FACTS AND IDEALS

BY

ANNIE BESANT

A LECTURE

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## THE MASTERS AS FACTS AND IDEALS.

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MR. SINNETT AND FRIENDS,—Almost a year ago I stood on this same platform to address, in this hall, an audience on my return from the Indian land. Since then much has happened. Myself I have travelled far and wide—to the other side of the world, to the lands that we may say lie beneath our feet ; back from those lands to India, and travelling through India once again from the South to the farthest North ; and then back again from India here, knowing that while I was away there had been much of attack, much of difficulty, much of disturbance ; hearing first a rumour in the far-off antipodes of doubt and of challenge, of so-called exposure, and of virulent abuse. And then when I came nearer, as far as India, gaining more particulars, hearing details of the attack, but still too far away to take effective part in the struggle, and, bound by other duty, unable to come at once back to the land where, outwardly at least, the struggle was at its hottest. When the time came that engagements permitted me to return, when the time came that once again I could stand in this hall to face an English audience, I thought it well to choose for subject that point round which the reality

of the attack had raged, and to take up in the first words that I should speak in this country the most really important matter at which the comments had been levelled while I was away. For I know that wherever there is difficulty there is the place where the brave soldier should be found ; and I did not forget that a writer in our English tongue had spoken of some who stood by religion when she walked in silver slippers in the sunshine amid applause, but were ashamed to stand beside her in shadow and under outrage, ashamed when she was clothed in rags instead of in purple. But I have learned in a stormy life that the moment for defence is the moment of attack ; that not when there is sunshine is one's word so necessary as when the storm-clouds gather and when difficulties are on every side. For the time to be loyal to truth is when truth is attacked ; the time to be faithful to knowledge is when knowledge is assailed ; and I should deem that those of us who know the truth of the existence of the Mahâtâmâs were traitors to truth and renegades to their responsibility, if they allowed themselves to be silent because laughed into silence by ridicule, or allowed themselves to deny their knowledge because the fact with which that knowledge is connected has been outraged by fraud and assailed by unfair dealing. Therefore, I choose the subject for my first address ;

therefore I come to lay before you evidence that I think worthy to your consideration, and to ask for it your patient attention and your thoughtful and deliberate weighing.

“Mahâtmâs, as Facts and Ideals.”—I have taken the double title, for there are some who know Them not as facts, to whom yet the ideal is valuable, precious and inspiring. Not every member of our Society believes in the existence of Mahâtmâs. There are many and many who are within the limits of the Society who have no knowledge and no belief upon the subject; and it is the rule of our Society that no declaration of faith shall be asked from any one who enters, save in the brotherhood of man, without the distinctions that on the surface are set up. So that within the limits of the Society you may have alike believer and non-believer in the present existence or the past existence of these great Teachers. But I, who believe in Them, and know Them to exist, speak here not in the name of the Society which has no creed, but in my own and in the name of others who share this belief or this knowledge with myself; and before you I am going to place what I believe to be rational evidence worthy of consideration—evidence that you can think over at leisure and make up your minds upon as you will; and I speak also for the sake of the ideal, for the ideals of the race are

precious, and cannot lightly be either outraged or denied. For great is this ideal of the Mahâtma, despite the idle laughter that has been used—for the name is merely the Sanskrit for “Great Spirit”—despite the laughter and the ridicule and the foolish talk which have gathered round the name. This mockery is a danger to a great ideal, valuable far beyond the bounds of the Theosophical Society. For there is not one great religion that has raised and elevated the minds of men, there is not one mighty faith that has led millions to a knowledge of the spiritual Life and the possibilities of human growth, there is not one that has not founded that belief on a Divine Man, there is not one that does not look back, as its Founder, to one of these mighty Souls that have brought knowledge of spiritual truth to the world. Look back to the past as you will, take what faith you choose. Everyone, of them is founded on this same ideal, and looks backward for its Teacher to a Man who is divine in His life. Around this ideal gather all the hopes of men, around this ideal gather the future destinies of humanity. For unless man be a spiritual Being, unless he have within himself the possibility of spiritual unfoldment, unless there be some evidence available that men have become perfect, that it is not only a dream of the future, but a reality which the race has already realized, unless it

be true that for you and for me there are open the same mighty possibilities that have been proved possible in the past by those who have achieved, then the hopes of men rest on no foundation, the longings of men after perfection have in them no certainty of realization, humanity remains but the thing of a day, instead of being heir to a boundless immortality. That man may become divine, that it is which has inspired the greatest of our race, which has cheered the miserable in their agony, and has glorified the future with a hope which is not a lie. That is why I defend the ideal. For what is the Mahâtma? He is the man who has become perfect, He is the man who has reached union with the Divine, He is the man who by slow degrees has developed the possibilities of the spiritual nature, and stands triumphant where we are struggling to-day. Every religion, I said, has borne witness to Him. You find that every religion of the world looks back to a Divine Teacher. You may have the name of Zoroaster in Persia, of Laotze in China, of Manu in India, of the Buddha in later days, of the Christ in Palestine, everyone of them the Divine Man, who has brought the certainty of human perfection to those who have come within the range of His influence. That is the ideal which is being outraged to-day, and for the sake of that ideal it is that I stand to speak before you to-night.

And now what shall be the line of our evidence? I propose first to suggest that the theory is a probable theory on the lines of natural evolution; that very briefly, in order to lead the way to the positive evidence. Then I propose to turn to the evidence for the existence of these perfected Divine Men in the past; then to come on from that to the evidence for Their existence in the present; then—because without this last part the lecture would remain unpractical for us—then to show how it is possible for men to become perfect, a slight sketch at least of the methods by which the Divine Man becomes.

First, then, for the theory that that existence of Masters is in itself probable and in accordance with the analogy of nature as we see it around us, as we know it in the past. Few to-day, probably, will dispute the fact of evolution. Few will deny that our race progresses, and that cycle after cycle you will find nations advancing and reaching higher and higher pinnacles of knowledge, higher and higher pinnacles in growth and in development. Theoretically there is nothing impossible or absurd in the theory that taking into consideration the vast periods of time which have elapsed since man first trod this earth, taking into consideration the enormous differences that we see to-day between the lowest savage and the highest man as he is generally known, taking

these differences in the present, and the vast spaces of time for evolution that lie behind us in the past, it is not at least irrational or absurd that there may have been evolution carried to a point in the case of some individuals as much above the evolution of the higher civilized man of to-day, as he is higher than the lowest type of savage in existence still. Nor is that all. It is not only that we have enormous ranges of time behind us, but that there are traces of mighty civilizations which show that the race had climbed high in knowledge, high in philosophy, high in science and in religion, thousands upon thousands of years ago, nay! I might say centuries of thousands of years. For looking backwards you see traces of mighty civilizations which imply the presence of men of a most advanced type, and it is scarcely rational to suppose that the so much talked of evolution has been nothing more than a mere ebb and flow, leaving nothing as result, nothing more than successive periods of high civilization and then of utter barbarism, and civilization again re-begun with no links to preserve continuity of knowledge. It is not at least impossible, and in a moment we shall see signs that it is probable, that out of that mighty past some will have grown upwards, advancing higher and higher and perfecting the human race in individuals, as slowly the general race will in its turn become perfect. Not impossible,



not even improbable, remembering that progress is the law of nature, and the vast spaces of time during which humanity has lived.

But from that mere possibility, which I take because it is well to clear out of the way at the outset the idea that the theory is in itself impossible and absurd, turning from that mere possibility, let us take historical evidence and let us see whether history does not, from time to time, show some gigantic human figures which stand out above and beyond the men of their time and the ordinary height of humanity; whether there is not evidence which cannot be denied that such Men are not merely the products of popular imagination, that They are not merely men of the past, exaggerated by popular tradition and seen magnified, as it were, through the haze of centuries. I speak of those Great Ones to whom I alluded, who have been the Founders of the great religions of the world. It is not only that there is unbroken tradition, and that the religions remain which these Men builded, but there is more than tradition, there is more than a religion which has grown; there is a literature, marked, definite, distinct, whose antiquity no scholar denies, although some may claim for it a vaster antiquity than others may be ready to concede. Take the later dates; they will serve my purpose, though I do not regard them as accurate. Take the

later dates that would be given you by the Orientalists who have studied the literature of China, of Persia, of India, to say nothing of later times. You have there certain books regarded as sacred, books for which the religion has claimed what may fairly be termed an immemorial antiquity. You have amongst the Chinese their ancient sacred books ; you have amongst the Pârsis, the followers of Zoroaster, their books, also now translated into your own tongue. You have from India the Vedas, the Upanishads, to say nothing of the later works, and I might, without possibility of challenge, give you long lists of mighty works which are held as Scriptures by the believers in these faiths. Who wrote those works, and whence the knowledge ? That they exist is obvious. That they must have authors can scarcely be denied. And yet those works from a far-off antiquity show a depth of spiritual knowledge, a depth of philosophic thought, a depth of insight into human nature, and a depth of moral teaching so magnificent, that the greatest minds of our own day, both in morals and in philosophy, must admit that those writings are greater than they can produce, and that the modern world can show nothing which even approaches them in sublimity.

It is not a question of tradition, but of books ; not a question of theory, but of fact ; for if the books are so great, the morality so pure, the philosophy so sub-

lime, and the knowledge so vast, their authors must have had the knowledge which therein you find incorporated. And the testimony of millions upon millions of human beings answers to the reality of the spiritual truth, and nations are guided by the teachings that thus have come down. Nor is that all. These teachings are similar wherever you find them. The same teaching of the unity of the Divine Life out of which the Universe has grown ; the same teaching of the identity of the Spirit in man with the Spirit from which the Universe has come ; the same teaching that man by certain methods may develop the spiritual Life in himself and come into positive knowledge of divinity, and not only hope and faith. So that you have, coming down from far-off times, at least this fact which cannot be denied : that some men lived in the far-off past whose thought was great enough, whose morality was pure enough, whose philosophy was sublime enough, to outlast the wrecks of civilization and the destructive force of time, and that to-day your Orientalists are translating for the teaching of the modern world that which mighty men of old once taught, and find the grandest thoughts to which the race has given birth in these Scriptures that have come down from the most ancient times.

That some then have lived far greater than ourselves, that some have lived whose knowledge goes

far beyond the knowledge that we possess, that we still learn in philosophy and in spiritual matters from these far-off Teachers who spoke millenniums ago; that is a fact that cannot be denied. That there have been Divine Men in the past that we speak of as Mahâtâmâs, that They have left the testimony to Their existence in this mighty and sublime literature, that is the first line of argument—the establishment of the existence in the past, the proof that such Men have lived and have taught, and that by Their teaching They have guided and helped millions of the human race. That Their teaching has been identical in its main outlines, that Their teaching is identical in its moral force, that the spiritual truths enunciated have come down unchanged through the centuries: so far, at least, we can speak with certainty, the ground so far is solid beneath our feet.

The statements in this literature appeal to human experience. They not only say that certain things are, but they say these things can be known. They not only declare the reality of the Soul, but they say that that reality can be proved; so that the teaching stands in this position, that it announces certain alleged facts which remain verifiable for all time, thereby affording a continually accumulating proof of the reality of the knowledge of Those who first gave the statements to the world.

Pass from that to the next point in the argument—that these statements have been verified by experience and are being verified to-day. Take for instance such a land as India. There you have an unbroken tradition, a tradition which comes down to the present time, a tradition that there always have been Teachers who may be found, Teachers who possess the knowledge which is hinted at in the books of which I speak, who can add the practical teaching to the theoretical statement, and enable people to verify by experiment that which is said to be true in the literature to which I have alluded. Ask any Indian of to-day what is his belief on this question, and he will tell you, if he has not been westernized, and you can gain his confidence, that always in his land there has remained the belief that these Men have existed in the past and have not passed out of existence in the present; that They have more and more withdrawn from the ordinary haunts of men, that They have become more and more difficult to discover as materiality has made its way and spirituality has diminished; but that still They can occasionally be found, that still the first steps of the Path are open. And not only is there that belief, but you will find scattered throughout India many many men who, while they have not reached the point of Mahâtmâship, have taken certain steps above the physical plane, and

have developed in themselves powers and capacities which the ordinary Westerner would look on as absolutely impossible of attainment. I do not now speak of the Mahâtâmâs, but of the hundreds of so-called Yogis scattered through the jungles and the mountains of India, some of whom habitually exercise remarkable powers—powers which here would seem incredible, but of which there is ever-accumulating testimony coming to you from the mouths of travellers who collect and who record the facts with which they themselves have come in contact. For the earlier stages of the development of the inner man are not so difficult of attainment, and in a country like India, where there is not the difficulty of scepticism to overcome, because there the belief has existed for thousands of years, you will find many and many a man who exercises the lower psychical powers, and a few who have gone far beyond that stage and exercise either the higher psychic faculties or the really spiritual powers of man. And you can find some who have personal experience, some who have individual knowledge of Teachers, of Masters, who train Their pupils in the higher path of what is called the Râja, or the Kingly, Yoga, that is, the Yoga which primarily trains the mind rather than the body, which works by concentration of the mind, by meditation and by the evolution of the higher mental faculties, on which

there is so much discussion here, and who by a definite system of training are able to consciously use powers of the mind which enable the possessor to pass beyond physical limitations, and passing out of the body to receive instruction which he is able then to bring back to the lower consciousness and impress on the physical brain, proving by his knowledge the reality of his teaching, and proving the existence of his Master by this knowledge which from Him he has obtained.

That then would be the next line of evidence available. Not available, you may fairly retort, to the majority of yourselves. But then you are surely bound to remember, as reasonable men and women, that if you desire knowledge you must seek it where the knowledge is to be found, and that it is as absurd for a number of men, who have never investigated, who have never even tried to investigate, who have never travelled, to sit here in a London office and write on that of which they have no knowledge, as it would be for some ignorant Indian, who has never had the slightest experience of your Western experiments, say in the Royal Institution, to sit down and declare that those are absolutely impossible and ludicrous, because he himself has not travelled here and has not had the opportunity of seeing them performed. You must deal with evidence on rational lines, and if you

cannot yourselves come into contact with certain facts, with certain phases of human life, you must either remain ignorant—and then you should be silent—or you should take the testimony of those who have carefully investigated, and have laid the result of their investigations before you.

And that leads me to my next line of argument. Suppose such Men existed in the past, suppose we admit, as every religion admits for its own Founder—though it may deny as to the Founders of other religions—suppose we admit that in the past Divine Men have lived, suppose that, believing in the immortality of the Spirit, we are bound to admit that They must still exist somewhere if They ever existed at all; then the next question will be: Do these Men of the past exist in the present? Can They be reached? Can They be known? And are there others who have reached a similar point, whose existence may be supported by evidence which at least is worthy of consideration? Do They still exist? Here I am going into a line of thought which I should adopt if I were trying to prove to you the existence of any person living in a country which you had not visited, living under conditions which you had not yourself experienced. That it can be absolutely demonstrated in every case I admit to be impossible. I cannot demonstrate to you, for instance,



the existence of Count Tolstoi. If you do not travel to Russia, if he does not happen to come here, and you do not happen to meet him, I cannot show you as an absolute matter of demonstration that he exists. But I could bring you evidence that would convince any reasonable man ; I could show you evidence which would be admitted in any Court of Law ; I could show you that there is no reason for denying his existence merely because you have not personally met him, and therefore obtained what you would call ocular proof of his existence.

Now what is the proof for the existence of Divine, of perfect Men living at the present time, reachable under certain conditions? What evidence can I submit to you for that? There are many of you probably who will object to my first witness ; but not for the objection am I going to hold back her name—I speak of H. P. Blavatsky. I know the attacks that from every side have been made upon her. I have read the latest attacks that while I was away were brought against her, and in face of those, having read, and read them carefully, I say that there remains enough evidence coming through her, untouched by those attacks, sufficient to put before you for your consideration, and sufficient to win the assent of rational men. H. P. Blavatsky is accused of fraud, accused of evil conduct, accused of being nothing

more than rogue and charlatan and impostor ; but there are certain facts remaining which you will have to deal with even if you believe, as I do not believe, in the truth of these exaggerated charges that are brought against her. Take if you will, for a moment—though I should deny it—take if you will some of the worst of those charges—that she had no contact with the Mahâtmâs at all, that she invented Them, that They did not exist outside her imagination, and that everything she said was falsehood, everything that she said and did was intended to mislead. Still you have to deal with the facts of her life, and with the facts of her books. You have to deal with the book known as *The Secret Doctrine*, and if you want to understand that you must read it before you wave it aside, and study it before you laugh at it. And I say this on purpose, because I have read the Appendix in which Mr. Coleman says it is full of plagiarisms, that he can prove here, there, and everywhere that she has borrowed from other books her knowledge ; he says that would account for the knowledge therein displayed. But what you have to consider is this : that she never claimed that she discovered the knowledge she gave to the world ; that her contention is that this knowledge comes down from a far-off past, is found in every Scripture, in every philosophy ; and the very purpose of that book is to quote from every

direction, from the Scriptures of every religion, from the writings of every people, in order to show the identity of the teaching and to prove the antiquity of the doctrine. What is new in the book is not the facts that therein you find. What is new in the book is not what has been found by Orientalists, and may be pointed to in one or another sacred book of the world. What is new is the knowledge which enabled her to select from the whole of these the facts which build up a single mighty conception of the evolution of the universe, the evolution of man, the coherent synthesis of the whole cosmogony. And that is her title to be the greatest Teacher of our time, because she had real knowledge, not mere book-learning, knowledge which enabled her to collect from scattered books the truths which, fitted together, made one mighty whole ; because she held the clue which she was able to follow with unerring accuracy through the maze, and show that all the scattered materials contained within them the possibility of the single building. And her work is the more wonderful because she did it not being a scholar ; because she did it not having had the education which would have enabled her to some extent to piece this knowledge together ; because she did what no Orientalists have done with all their learning, what not all the Orientalists together have done with all the help of

their knowledge of Eastern tongues and their study of Eastern literature. There is not one of them, who out of that tangled mass brought out that mighty synthesis ; not one of them who out of that chaos was able to build up a cosmos. But this Russian woman with little education, this Russian woman who was no scholar, and pretended to be none, somewhere or other she gained a knowledge that enabled her to do what none of your scholars can do, somewhere or other she had a teaching which enabled her to reduce this chaos to order, and to bring out a mighty scheme of evolution which makes us understand the universe and man. She said it was not hers, she never claimed to have originated it ; she was always speaking of her own want of knowledge and referring to Those who taught her. But the fact you have to meet is this—the knowledge is there, and stands there for criticism. Not one other person has done it, although the same materials that Mr. Coleman says she used are open to the whole of the world. And my answer is : Give us then some others who can do as she did. Let us have some more of this plagiarism which is able to gather from so many sources everything that is necessary for a mighty philosophy. Let your boasted scholars do it, and help us to understand, as she helps us to understand, the religions of the world. Let them show us the identity, let them show us the

reality, and then we may begin perhaps to revise our opinion of her ; but until that is done her claim remains unshaken, even though you should prove that she may have erred in much, and even although stones may be thrown at her by those who can never rival her in unselfishness, in self-sacrifice and in knowledge.

And the reason that you cannot shake us in our belief in this is because she helped us to knowledge, because we gained from her teaching that which none other gave, because she opened up to us ways of gaining further knowledge along the same lines, and from the same Teachers who had taught her. That is why we remain such fools as people think us, in clinging to her and clinging to her memory, for we owe her a debt of gratitude that we never shall be able to pay, and never shall stone be cast upon her grave which I will not try to lift off it, for the sake of the knowledge to which she led me, and the priceless benefits that she gave me in the teaching which she began.

Now the evidence that I ask you to take from her is not the evidence of phenomena. I put that on one side. It is not the evidence of scholarship. She had none, she never pretended to it. It is not the question as to whether or not her life from her childhood was perfect. It is that she had certain definite knowledge

acquired somehow, which cannot be accounted for by ordinary education, which she obtained in a comparatively short space of time, which astonished her own family and friends when first she produced it, and which she said she got from certain Teachers—the important fact being that she possessed it, however it may have come into her possession. That is the evidence that I want to lay stress upon, because that is the point which cannot be shaken, and it removes her testimony for the moment from the whole question of fraud of any sort ; it remains above it and beyond it. And I say that even if you think the evidence against her convincing that she went at times beyond the truth—I am not saying it is so, but I am saying, suppose you think the evidence convincing—what then ? There remains the fact of this knowledge embodied in *The Secret Doctrine*, which stands there as a witness to her, and which I venture to say cannot be overthrown, and the more you degrade her, the less you make of her, the more you prove the existence of and exalt the Great Ones who worked through her, and gave her what she produced.

Now, there is another point about another book of hers which is to me of special interest, a book that you may know, *The Voice of the Silence* : that book happened to be written while I was with her at Fontainebleau. It is a small book, and in what I am

going to say I speak only of the book itself: I am not speaking of the notes; those were done afterwards. The book itself is what may be called a prose poem in three divisions. She wrote it at Fontainebleau, and the greater part was done when I was with her, and I sat in the room while she was writing it. I know that she did not write it referring to any books, but she wrote it down steadily, hour after hour, exactly as though she were writing either from memory or from reading it where no book was. She produced, in the evening, that manuscript that I saw her write as I sat with her, and asked myself and others to correct it for English, for she said that she had written it so quickly that it was sure to be bad. We did not alter in that more than a few words, and it remains as a specimen of marvellously beautiful literary work putting everything else aside.

Now, Mr. Coleman says that he can find this in a number of other books. I can only hope he did not read the book before making that statement. For the book is, as I said, a prose poem, full of spiritual inspiration, full of food for the heart, stimulating the loftiest virtue and containing the noblest ideals. It is not a hotch-potch drawn from various sources, but a coherent ethical whole. It moves us, not by a statement of facts gathered from books, but by an appeal to the divinest instincts of our nature. It is

its own best testimony to the source whence it came.

Pass now from Madame Blavatsky herself to those she taught. Our Chairman is one of them. Many others are living, here and elsewhere, whom she taught at first, and who have passed from her training into and under the training of her Teachers. And here you have an accumulating testimony of men and women who, of their own authority, by first-hand evidence, out of their own experience, testify to the reality of the existence of these Teachers, and to their own personal knowledge of Them, and of the teaching which they have personally received from Them.

I have mentioned during the last week in two of your papers a small part of my own evidence. Mr. Sinnett to-day in his opening speech has alluded to evidence extending in his own case over fifteen years. Many others have done the same, like Countess Wachtmeister, like Colonel Olcott, like others who have given their own individual testimony. Are you going to say that all these people are frauds? With what right do you so condemn them? Are you going to say that they are all fools? But they are men and women living the ordinary life, men and women who amongst those who know them stand as persons of education, of intelligence, showing the ordinary powers of discrimination and of knowledge that



others possess. Are you going to say that we are all mad? That is rather a rash assertion to make against constantly growing numbers of apparently reasonable men and women. What other sort of evidence can you demand for the existence of any one save the evidence of those who know them, of persons of integrity and of honour who are living amongst yourselves? We bear to These our personal testimony, not founded on documents, not founded on writings, not founded simply on letters, and so on, on which there is always possibility of deception arising, but on individual communion with individual Teachers, and teaching received which otherwise we could not have gained. That is the kind of evidence you have to deal with; and no case of proving fraud against one or two or three people will upset the accumulating testimony of reasonable men and women, who are coming into connection with those Teachers, and who bear testimony to what they themselves know. That is the kind of evidence that you have to meet, that the kind of testimony that you have to overthrow. And however much you may be amused at smart and clever writing, which takes advantage of the deception practised by one in order to discredit the whole, you can no more discredit this mass of testimony by proving one man to be fraudulent, than you can challenge, say, the reality of real coin because a forger

may circulate some false coin in a community, and people may pass the coin for the moment, and may be deceived into believing that it is real.

But you may say : We want first-hand evidence for ourselves. You can have it ; but you must take the way. You can have the evidence amounting to demonstration for yourselves if you choose to take the trouble, if you choose to give the time. Not an unreasonable demand.

If you want to verify for yourselves the experiments of some great chemist, can you do it by simply going into a laboratory and mixing together the things that you find there? If you want to verify some of the latest experiments in chemical science, do you suppose that you can do it for yourselves, without giving years of trouble and of study to master the science in which you want to carry out a critical experiment? And what would you think of the value of the criticism of some person absolutely ignorant of chemistry, if he said the experiment could not be performed, merely because he was not able to do it without training and without knowledge?

Therefore I said that I would tell you how the Mahâtma becomes. For only those who are willing to aim at that goal can obtain the absolute demonstration of the existence of Those who have achieved. That is the price that has to be paid. And without

this only probability? Yes, reasonable probability; testimony of others which you would accept on any other matter, on which, in a law-court, you would pass vast sums of money, large estates, or anything else; that you can have by simply looking into the available evidence of which I have been sketching merely the outline. But personal demonstration? For that you must begin yourselves to develop in the way in which Their development has been made; and in order that anyone who desires may begin to follow that line and follow it to its natural ending, there have been published to the world the preliminary steps upon the Path, the steps that are taken by those who attain the knowledge, the steps that anyone may begin to take, and by which he in his turn may acquire a certainty similar to that which some of us possess. Two little books, especially, have been published, which trace the beginnings of the Path, one called *Light on the Path*, the other, the one to which I before alluded, *The Voice of the Silence*; and in addition to those there are many hints scattered through Theosophical literature, and becoming more and more numerous as the individual experience of disciples increases as the years go on.

How then should an ordinary man or woman begin? If they desire to get evidence for themselves as to the possibility of this development, which in the end

will make the perfect Man—the man become Divine—the first, the early steps, are those which every religion has taught—carefulness and unselfishness in life, discharge of duty in whatever place in life man or woman may happen to be. To use the phrase which is used in this book:\* “Follow the wheel of life; follow the wheel of duty to race and kin;” that is a preliminary. For those who would gain knowledge of the Soul must begin in this way, which has ever been taught, by the leaving off of evil ways, and by the following of good; by purity in life, by service to men, by the unselfish effort, continually repeated, to be useful in whatever place one may be in by the law of nature. The endeavour to discharge to the fullest every obligation, the endeavour to live a life which shall leave the world better than it was found, the endeavour to live nobly, unselfishly and purely—these are conditions laid down for those who would find the Path.

And here let me say that unless reincarnation be true, then most certainly this development is not possible. In no one human life could that long Path be trodden; in no new-born Soul could be developed these divine possibilities; unless it be true that the Soul of man comes back life after life to earth, bringing with it to every new life the experience of the

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\* *The Voice of the Silence.*

lives behind, building up higher and higher character life after life, then indeed the Mahâtmâ would be an impossibility, and the perfection of man would be but the dream of the poet. Reincarnation is taken for granted in the whole of this teaching, as a fundamental fact in nature, on which the perfection of the individual must depend. First then, a man through many lives must set himself to live well, to live usefully, to live nobly, so that he may be born time after time with higher and higher qualities, with nobler and nobler faculties. Next, there is a stage in this human evolution, marked and definite, where the Soul having long been struggling upwards raises itself a little beyond the ordinary evolution of man. There are men and women who are exceptionally unselfish, who show exceptional capacities, exceptional intuitions, exceptional love for spiritual things, exceptional devotion to the service of mankind; when those exceptional qualities begin to manifest themselves, then comes the time when one of the great Teachers takes that person in hand individually, in order to guide the further evolution and to train the evolving Soul. The earlier efforts must be made in concert with the great spiritual forces which spread through all the world. But when those have been utilised, when men and women have done their best, as it were, along this line of general spiritual growth,

then comes the stage when the Teacher comes forward to guide the further evolution, and certain definite demands are made, if this further evolution is to proceed. These are laid down in the books to which I alluded. Summed up in a phrase, or rather in two phrases, they might be called, "The realization of non-separateness," which I will explain in a moment, and "rigid self-discipline." Non-separateness on the one side, self-discipline upon the other. Now "non-separateness" is a technical word, which means this: that you realise that you are one fundamentally with all that lives and breathes, that you do not separate yourself from any living thing, that you separate yourself neither from the sinner nor from the saint, neither from the highest nor from the lowest of mankind. Nay, not even from the lower forms of living things, and things called non-living, which you recognise as being one in essence, and one with your innermost self. How shall it be shown? It is shown by the deliberate attempt and training to begin to identify yourself with the sufferings, with the feelings, and with the wants of man. You are told: "Let thy Soul lend its ear to every cry of pain, like as the lotus bares its heart to drink the morning sun. Let not the fierce sun dry one tear of pain, before thyself hast wiped it from the sufferer's eye." But that is not all. "Let each burning human drop fall on thy heart and there

remain ; nor ever brush it off, until the pain that caused it is removed."\* There is the first note. Go out to the sufferer and relieve his pain ; but relieving his pain, let it wring your own heart, and let it remain there as a constant suffering until the cause of that pain has been removed. That is the first stage of non-separateness. Identify yourself with the sorrows and the joys of the world ; let the sorrow of everyone be your sorrow, the pain of everyone your pain, the joy of everyone your joy. Your heart, you are told, must answer to every thrill in other hearts, as the string gives back the note of music to which it has been attuned. You must feel the pain, you must feel the agony ; nay, you must feel the sin and the shame as your sin and your shame, and make it part of your own consciousness, and bear it, and never try to escape therefrom. You must train yourself in a sensitiveness which will answer to every suffering of mankind, and you must carry that out in deed as well as in feeling ; for you are told again that : "Inaction in a deed of mercy is an action in a deadly sin." But you must not only realize the pain of the world and make it yours ; you must be as hard to yourself as you are tender to those around. You have no time to spend on your own troubles, if

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\* *The Voice of the Silence*. The other quotations are from the same book.

the trouble of the world is to become yours. You have no strength to waste on laments over your own grief, if you are to be identified with the sorrows of mankind. And so it is said that you must be as hard as the stone of the mango-fruit to your own pains and sorrows, while soft as its pulp to the pains and sorrows of other men.

And thus life after life you must be trained, life after life becoming more and more identified with all, and breaking down everything that separates man from man. That is why brotherhood is our only condition ; because the recognition of that is the first step towards this realization of non-separateness, which is necessary if the disciple is to progress. And the definite training of the disciple is a training which makes him sensitive to the sorrows of all, in order that, feeling, he may be ready to help, and which trains him in this self-identification with the whole, in order that he may at last become one of the Saviours of the world. For as this training proceeds life after life, there gradually develops in this human being an ever-growing sympathy, an ever-deepening compassion, a charity which nothing can stain, and a tolerance which nothing can shake. No injury can give offence, for the sorrow is for the one who does the injury, and not for the blow which is struck at one's self. No anger can arise against any wrong, for you



understand why the wrong is done, and you sorrow for the doer and have no time to waste in anger. You will not condone wrong, you will not say that wrong is right, you will not pretend that good is evil, for that would be the greatest cruelty and would make the progress of the race impossible. But while recognizing the evil, there will be no anger against the evil-doer, for he is one with your own Soul, and you recognise no separation between yourself and him.

To what end? Because as this growth proceeds memory and knowledge will grow; because as this growth proceeds the developing life of the Spirit within the disciple will show itself out more and more in the walks of men, and gradually he will become marked out as a worker for man, a helper for man, a toiler for man, working for him to enlighten his ignorance, to bring him knowledge, and to show him the reality that underlies all the illusions in the world. And he must be hard to himself because he is to stand between man and evil, because he is to stand between his weaker brothers and the dark powers that otherwise might crush them. The illustrations given here of what the disciple must be is that he is to be like a star which gives light to all, but takes from none; that he is to be like the snow which takes on itself the frost and the biting winds,

in order that the seeds below may sleep uninjured by the cold, and have the possibility of growth when the season for growth shall come. There is the training to which submission is demanded by these Divine Teachers ; there what they claim from men who desire to be disciples. Not accomplishment at first, but endeavour ; not perfection at first, but effort ; not certainly the showing out of the ideal, but the striving after it amid whatever failure and amid whatever error. And I ask you if those of us who realise this as ideal, and who know that this is the demand which our Teachers make upon us, is it likely that we should act for the injury of society, or be anything save the servants of men in obedience to Those whose law we strive to obey ? And then, as I said, life after life these qualities develop, until there comes at last a time, when the weaknesses of men have fallen away, when the frailties of human nature have gradually been overcome, when a compassion that nothing can shake, a purity that nothing can soil, a knowledge mighty in its scope, and a spirituality that makes itself felt—when these are the qualities that mark the disciple who is nearing the threshold of liberation ; until the day dawns when the treading of this Path is finished, the time comes when the disciple's course is over, and the last possibility of the Perfect Man opens before his eyes. And then for a while the earth, as it were,

drops into the background ; he stands—the liberated Soul as he is called, the Soul that has won his freedom, the Soul that has conquered human limitations—he stands on the threshold of Nirvâna of that perfect consciousness and bliss which go beyond possibility of human thought, which go beyond possibility of our limited consciousness. And as he stands there it has been said that there is silence ; silence in Nature, one of whose children is rising beyond her, silence which nothing for a time may break, when the liberated Soul has accomplished his freedom. Silence—and it is broken by a voice : it is a voice that unites into one mighty cry the whole of the misery of the world which has been left behind. A cry from the world in its darkness, in its misery, in its spiritual starvation, in its moral degradation. And in that silence surrounding the liberated Soul, the cry that comes across is the cry of misery from the human race to the Soul that has gone beyond his brothers, to the Soul that is free while they are left in chains.

How shall he go further ? Life after life he has learned to identify himself with man ; life after life he has learned to answer to every cry of pain. Can he go onward freed, and leave others in chains ? Can he go onward into bliss, and leave the world in sorrow ? Him whom we call the Mahâtmâ is the liberated Soul who has the right to go onward, but for Love's sake turns back,

who brings His knowledge to the helping of ignorance, brings His purity to the cleansing of foulness, brings His light to the chasing away of darkness, and takes up again the burden of the flesh till all the race of men shall be free with Him, and He shall go onward not alone, but as father of a mighty family, bringing humanity with Him to share the common goal and the common bliss in Nirvâna. That is the Mahâtma. Life after life of effort crowned with supreme renunciation ; perfection gained by struggle and by toil, and then brought back to help others till they stand where He is standing. Every Soul that stretches out his hands, His hand is ready to help. Of every brother of His race that asks for guidance, His heart answers to the cry ; and They stand there waiting until we are willing to be taught, and give Them the opportunity which They have renounced Nirvâna to secure.

Is that an ideal for scoffing, for laughter, for idle ridicule? If it be only a dream, it is the noblest dream that humanity has ever dreamed ; the fullest of self-sacrifice, and the most inspiring of ideals. To some a fact—a fact more real than life. But to those to whom it is no fact it might be an ideal ; an ideal of self-sacrifice, of knowledge and of love. That such Men are, some of us know. But even if you believe not in Them, there is nothing in the ideal that is not

noble, and by thinking of which you may not grow higher and higher towards the light.

The Christian has the same ideal in his Christ: the Buddhist the same ideal in his Buddha. Every faith has the same ideal in the Man whom it regards as Divine. And we stand as witness to all religions that their faith is real and not false ; their Teachers a reality, and not a dream ; for the Teacher is the realization of the promise in the disciple, the realization of the ideal that we adore. And so to some of us these Divine Teachers, whom we know to live, are a daily inspiration. We can only come in contact with Them as we strive to purify ourselves. We can only learn more as we practise what already They have taught. And if I have spoken here to-night at first of a theory, then of the historical past, then of the witness that we bear you in the present, and lastly of the steps that all may take if they will, it is because I want to lift the ideal out of all the ridicule that has been heaped upon it, away from all the mud that has been cast upon it, out of the jar and the strife which has been made to surround it.

Blame us as you will, but leave that noble ideal of human perfection untouched. Laugh at us as you will, but do not laugh at the Perfect Man, the man made God, in whom, after all, the most of you believe. Do not, you who are Christians, be false to your own

religion, and leave your Christ only as a matter of faith and not of living reality, as many of you know that He is to-day. And remember that whatever the name, the ideal is the same ; whatever the title, the thought that underlies it is identical.

And as you think, you develop ; as is your ideal, so gradually your lives will become. For there is this transforming power in thought, that if your ideals are paltry your lives will be paltry ; if your ideals are material your lives will be material. Take then this ideal and think of it, and your lives will become penetrated by its purity ; you will become the nobler men and the nobler women, because it forms a subject of your thought, and the thought transforms you into its own likeness. It is true that men become like that they worship ; it is true that men become like that on which they think. And this ideal of the Perfect Man has in it the hope for the future of the race. Therefore I plead for it to you to-day, and I point you to the Path by which from an ideal it may become a living reality, turning from a hope into a living Teacher, and from a lofty ideal for aspiration into the Friend and the Master to whom you may give your life.

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EVOLUTION OF SOCIETY.

BY  
ANNIE BESANT.

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## THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIETY.

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THE recognition of Evolution in the physical world, of gradual progress from the simple to the complex, of reiterated integration as the steps of that progress, has led to the application of the same unifying principle to the psychical world, and to the suggestion of its application to the sociological. As the lowest forms of life consist of simple independent cells, as these cells become grouped, differentiated, integrated into tissues, as these tissues become more complex in arrangement, more co-ordinated, in the highest organisms, so, it is argued, do the individual human units become grouped into families and tribes, integrated into a social organism, of which the multiplicity of the composing elements is the measure of its adaptability, the unity and the correlation thereof the measure of its strength. If Society be thus regarded as an organism instead of as a bag of marbles, if it be conceded that the health of the whole depends upon the healthy functioning of every part, in correlation not in independence, then all that tends towards integration will be recognised as of life, all that tends towards disintegration as of death. Judging the future by the past we shall be prepared to look forward to the realisation of a fuller social unity than has yet been reached, and to recognise that by an inexorable necessity Society must either integrate yet further, or must begin a movement which will result in its resolution into its elements. The further integration may be regarded as an ideal to be embraced, or as a doom to be striven against, as a brotherhood to be rejoiced in or as a slavery to be abhorred ;



but the believer in Evolution must acknowledge that if Society is to endure, this further integration is inevitable.

The object of this and of the following papers is to roughly outline this Evolution of Society, and to consider the type towards which it is working; and they will deal with: I. The Barbaric Period and its Survivals; II. The Industrial Period and its products; III. The Conflict between Social and Anti-Social Tendencies; IV. The Reconcilement of Diverging Interests.

### I.—THE BARBARIC PERIOD AND ITS SURVIVALS.

Association for the common weal is, as is well known, by no means confined to man. Many herbivorous animals live in herds, and in the pastures the females and the young graze in the centre, while the males form a protective ring, and sentinels, carefully posted, give warning cries of alarm if danger approaches. Wolves hunt in packs, and together pull down prey with which singly they could not cope. Bees and ants live in thickly populated communities, with their builders, food-gatherers, nurses, and in many cases soldiers, all working for the Society as a whole. Man's nearest congeners, the apes, are social animals and differ little in their qualities and morality from the lowest savages. And in all these one phenomenon is noteworthy: the subordination of the individual to restraints for the general good. When a tribe of monkeys goes out on a predatory expedition—as to rob an orchard—the young ones are slapped if they are not silent and obedient. When a goat is discharging a sentinel's duty, he may not feed at ease on the tempting grass on which his comrades are luxuriating, confident in his vigilant loyalty. The working-bee must not keep the honey it gathers, but must carry it home for storing. Each member of the community yields up something of individual freedom, receiving in exchange the benefits of association, and it is among those who—like the bees and ants—have carried very far the subordination of the unit to the social organism that the most successful communities are found.

In the Barbaric Period of human society the virtues evolved are much the same as those which characterise the brute communities—courage, discipline of a rudimentary kind, loyalty to the head of the tribe. These are evolved

because they are necessary to the success of the tribe, and those who are weak in them perish in the struggle for existence. They are evolved by the pressure of necessity, by the exigencies of the common life. As disputes can only be settled by war, the military chief is indispensable, and the strong and cunning man is made the head of the community. As social conditions become a little more settled, and the conventions which grew up from necessity become gradually crystallised into law, the hereditary principle creeps in, and the most capable adult member of a family—now recognised as royal—is selected to fill the throne; as law increases yet more in authority, the personal capacity of the sovereign becomes a matter of less vital necessity, and the eldest son succeeds to his father's crown, whether he is major or minor; at last the time is reached, as with ourselves, in which a monarch is simply a survival, interesting—as are all rudimentary organs, because marks of an ancestral condition—but perfectly useless: a mere excrescence like the dew-claw of a St. Bernard dog. Essentially barbaric, it is an anachronism in a civilised society, and only endures by virtue of its inoffensiveness and of the public inertia.

Still keeping within the Barbaric Period, but passing out of the stage in which every man was a warrior, we come to the time in which Society was constituted of two classes: the fighting class, which consisted of king and nobles; the working class, which consisted of those who toiled on the land and of all engaged in commerce of any kind, whether by producing goods for sale or by selling them when produced. The fighting class had then its real utility; if the king and the nobles claimed the privilege of governing, they discharged the duty of protecting, and while they tyrannised and robbed at home to a considerable extent, they defended against foreign oppression the realm to which they belonged. Fighting animals they were, like the big-jawed soldiers of the Termites, but they were necessary while the nations had not emerged from barbarism. But these were not in the line of evolution; the evolving life of the nation was apart from them; they were the wall that protected, that encircled the life that was developing, and their descendants are but the crumbling ruins which mark where once the bastions and the ramparts frowned.

The life of the nation was in its workers, among whom the agriculturists claim our first attention. The villeins who tilled the soil under the feudal system were, in a very real sense, the chattels of their lord. They were bound to the soil, might be recovered by a legal suit if they left their lord's estate, were liable to seizure of all their property by their lord at his mere will, might be imprisoned or assaulted by him, and in many cases the lord held over them a power of life and death. These feudal privileges of the lord gradually disappeared in England during the Middle Ages; many villeins fled their native soil, hired themselves out in other parts of the country, and were never recovered by their lords; residence for a year and a day in a walled town made a villein free: relaxations of servitude made by an indulgent lord became customary: villeins became transformed into copyholders in many cases, and in one way or another the peasantry emerged from nominal slavery.

In trying to realise the lot of the villein and to compare it with that of his modern descendant, the agricultural laborer, it is not sufficient to study only the conditions of his servitude, the extreme roughness and poorness of his house, his ignorance, the frequent scarcity and general coarseness of his food. It must be remembered that if his lord was his owner he was also his protector, and that the landowner's feeling of duty to his tenants and the tenants' feeling of dependence and claim for assistance on the landowner which still exist in some old-world parts of England, are survivals of the old feudal tie which implied subjection without consciousness of degradation. Further, while the hut of the villein was of the poorest kind, the castle of the lord by no means realised our modern idea of a comfortable house: the villein had straw on his floor, but the lord had only rushes; and the general roughness of the time effected all alike. If the villein was ignorant, so was the lord, and if the lord tilted gaily with the lance, the villein broke heads as gaily with his staff. If the villein was sometimes sorely put to it to find bread, at other times he revelled in rough abundance, and the doles at the monastery gates often eked out his scanty supply when Nature was unkind. Speaking broadly, there was far less difference then in fashion of living between lord and villein than now between lord and laborer: less difference of taste, of amusements, of education, and

therefore more comradeship: the baron's retainers then dined at the table of the lord without shocking any fastidious taste, while my lord marquis now would find his dinner much interfered with if his servants sat at it as of old. And since happiness is very much a matter of comparison, it may be doubted whether the villein was not happier than the agricultural laborer is now, and whether the lop-sided progress of Society, which has given so little to the toiler in comparison with what it has given to the idler, has been much of a blessing to the laboring agricultural class.

The growth of industries other than agricultural marked with unmistakable distinctness the evolution of society from barbarism. Handworkers in these tended to produce in groups, and soon associated themselves in towns, partly for convenience in production and distribution, partly for self-defence; divorced from the land, they were naturally less directly dependent on the landowners than were the agriculturists, and as the king's wish to plunder them was checked by the nobles, and the nobles' wish to plunder by the king, they gradually secured charters which protected them from both, and waxed free and prosperous. Each craft had its guild, and the apprentice entering to learn his trade worked his way step by step up to the position of a master craftsman. There were then no large aggregations of workers, as in our modern factories, but the lad placed in a workshop was one of a small group, and was trained as a member of a family rather than as a "hand". Entrance into the workshop of a famous master was eagerly sought for, and in consequence of the slight division of labor there was a pride in capable workmanship which is now almost impossible. Individual ability, under this system, was at once apparent and had scope for development, so that art and industry were more closely united than they have ever been since. The artist was largely a handicraftsman in the industrial sense, and the handicraftsman was largely an artist; and side by side with this mental development existed physical vigor, in consequence of the small size of the towns and the accessibility of the open country. In industrial pursuits, as in those of the countryside, the great division between classes which is now so grievous did not exist; the "master" worked with his men, eat with them, lived with them, and the

"industrious apprentice" who "married his master's daughter" was not a poetic fiction, but an inspiring and realisable ideal. Certainly the amount of products turned out could not rival the vast quantities now produced, but the lives of the producers were healthier and more human than those of too many of the handicraftsmen of to-day.

Among the survivals from the Barbaric Period present in modern society, the monarch has already been mentioned. Perhaps no form of monarchy exposes its anachronistic character more completely than the "limited monarchy" of modern England. There is an exquisite absurdity in the man who *can* being changed into the man who *can not*.<sup>1</sup> The hereditary aristocracy is another survival from barbarism, and is a curious travesty of the scientific truth as to race. The analogy of a high-bred horse and a high-bred man is misleading, for the human breeding is a matter of name, not of qualities. There can be no doubt that a human aristocracy might be bred, by matching men and women who showed in marked degree the qualities which might be selected as admirable, but the aristocracy which proceeds from male idlers, profligate in their undisciplined youth and luxurious in their pampered maturity, matched with female idlers, whose uselessness, vanity, and extravagance are their chief recommendations, is not one which should bear rule in a strong and intellectual nation. To the barbaric Past it belongs, not to the semi-civilised Present, and the lease of its power will be determined when the workers realise the power which has now passed into their hands.

## II.—THE INDUSTRIAL PERIOD AND ITS PRODUCTS.

The Industrial Period may fairly be taken as beginning for all practical purposes with the invention of the Spinning Jenny by Hargreaves, a weaver, in 1764; of the Spinning Machine by Arkwright, a barber, in 1768; of the Mule, by Crompton, a weaver, 1776. If to these we add the virtual invention of the Steam Engine by Watt in 1765, we have within these twelve years, from 1764 to 1776, the vastest revolution in industry the world has known, the birth of a new Period in the Evolution of Society. As

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<sup>1</sup> King, German *König*, has the same root as *Können*, to be able.

Green points out in his "History of the English People", the "handloom used in the Manchester cotton trade had until that time retained the primitive shape which is still found in the handlooms of India" (p. 768), and the conditions of labor were feudal, patriarchic, domestic, not industrial, in the modern sense of the word. The introduction of machinery (other than the simple kinds used in earlier times) revolutionised social life as well as industry, and the vast increase of man's power over nature not only affected the production of manufactured goods, but affected also the condition of the worker, the climate and aspect of the country, as also, with the most far-reaching results, the framework and tendencies of society. These all are the products of the Industrial Period, and these all must be taken into consideration if we would estimate fairly and fully the net result of good or of evil which remains.

It is obvious that the great value of machinery lies in the fact that it produces much with little labor; in the words of a Report: "One man in a cotton-mill superintends as much work as could have been done by two hundred, seventy years ago." The result of this should have been widespread comfort, general sufficiency of the necessities of life, a great diminution of the hours of labor: the result of it has been the accumulation of vast fortunes by a comparatively few, the deadening and the brutalising of crowds of the handworkers. Whether we regard the immediate or the general results, we shall find them very different from the rosy hopes of those who gave to the world the outcome of their inventive genius.

The immediate result of the introduction of machinery was, as everyone knows, terrible suffering among handicraftsmen. Let us hear Green, an impartial witness. "Manufactures profited by the great discoveries of Watt and Arkwright; and the consumption of raw cotton in the mills of Lancashire rose during the same period from fifty to a hundred millions of pounds. The vast accumulation of capital, as well as the constant recurrence of bad seasons at this time, told upon the land, and forced agriculture into a feverish and unhealthy prosperity. Wheat rose to famine prices, and the value of land rose in proportion with the price of wheat. Inclosures went on with prodigious rapidity; the income of every landowner was doubled, while the farmers were

able to introduce improvements into the processes of agriculture which changed the whole face of the country. But if the increase of wealth was enormous, its distribution was partial. During the fifteen years which preceded Waterloo, the number of the population rose from ten to thirteen millions, and this rapid increase kept down the rate of wages, which would naturally have advanced in a corresponding degree with the increase of the national wealth. Even manufactures, though destined in the long run to benefit the laboring classes, seemed at first rather to depress them. One of the earliest results of the introduction of machinery was the ruin of a number of small trades which were carried on at home, and the pauperisation of families who relied on them for support. In the winter of 1811 the terrible pressure of this transition from handicraft to machinery was seen in the Luddite, or machine-breaking, riots which broke out over the northern and midland counties, and which were only suppressed by military force. While labor was thus thrown out of its older grooves, and the rate of wages kept down at an artificially low figure by the rapid increase of population, the rise in the price of wheat, which brought wealth to the landowner and the farmer, brought famine and death to the poor, for England was cut off by the war from the vast cornfields of the Continent or of America, which nowadays redress from their abundance the results of a bad harvest. Scarcity was followed by a terrible pauperisation of the laboring classes. The amount of the poor-rate rose fifty per cent., and with the increase of poverty followed its inevitable result, the increase of crime" ("Hist. of the English People", pp. 805, 806).

It is noteworthy that where handworkers are concerned, no claim for compensation is ever put forward when they are deprived of their means of livelihood. If it is proposed to nationalise the land, it is at once alleged that the present owners must be bought out, on the ground that it would be unjust to deprive them of their incomes from land and to reduce them to poverty for the benefit of the community. But no one is so scrupulous, or so tender-hearted, when only laborers are ruined; no one ever proposed to compensate the handicraftsmen who were robbed of their means of existence by the introduction of machinery. Great stress is laid on the general benefit of the community,

for which it appears it is right to sacrifice the worker, but wrong to sacrifice the idler. And further, if a starving laborer fall back on the poor-rate he is at once "pauperised", and everyone knows it is a disgrace to be a pauper—on the parish: but if a Duke of Marlborough, with huge estates, pockets a sum of £107,000 out of the taxes he is not "pauperised", and everyone knows it is no disgrace to be a pauper—on the nation.

The general result of the introduction of machinery has clearly been a great increase of comfort and wealth to the upper and middle classes, and to the upper stratum of the artisans; but great masses of the people are worse off absolutely, as well as relatively, in consequence of its introduction. They are more crowded together, the air they breathe is fouler, the food they eat is more unwholesome, the trades they live by are more ruinous to health, than they were in the time when towns were smaller, the open country more accessible, the air unpoisoned by factory chimneys and chemical works; the times when "master and man" slept in the same house, dined at the same table, worked in the same room.

Machinery has enormously increased the amount of goods produced, but it has not lightened the toil of the workers; it has sent down prices, but the laborer must work as long to gain his bare subsistence. The introduction of sewing-machines may serve as a typical instance. It was said that they would lighten the toil of the needlewoman, and enable her to earn a livelihood more easily. Nothing of the sort has happened; the needlewoman works for quite as many hours, and earns quite as meagre a subsistence; she makes three or four coats where before she made one, but her wages are not trebled or quadrupled; the profits of her employer are increased, and coats are sold at a lower price. The real value of machinery, again, may be seen when a sewing machine is introduced into a house where the needlework is done at home; there the toil is lightened; the necessary work is done in a fifth part of the time, and the workers have leisure instead of long hours of labor. The inference is irresistible; machinery is of enormous value in lessening human toil when it is owned by those who produce, and who produce for use, not for profit; it is not of value to those who work it for wages, for the wages depend, not on the worth of the goods



produced, but on the competition in the labor-market and the cost of subsistence.

In dealing with the products of the Industrial Period, the human products are of the most extreme importance. How have the conditions of labor, the environment, and therefore the life of the laborer, been affected by the introduction of machinery? I say, without fear of contradiction, that the environment of the manufacturing laborers has altered for the worse, and that the result of that worsening may be seen in the physical deterioration of the great masses of the workers in factory towns. Compare the tall, upright, brown laborer of Lincolnshire with the short, bowed, pallid knife-grinder of Sheffield; compare the robust, stalwart Northumberland miner with the slender, pasty-cheeked lads who come trooping out of a Manchester cotton-mill; and you will soon see the physical difference caused by difference of labor-conditions. Sheffield workers die young, their lungs choked with the metal dust they inhale; cotton-factory "hands" die of the fibre-laden air they breathe. I grant that Sheffield goods are cheap, if by cheapness is meant that fewer coins are paid for them than would have been required ere they were made by machinery; but to me those things are not cheap which are rendered less in money-cost by destruction of human life. Hood once wrote of cheap shirts:

"O men with sisters dear,  
O men with mothers and wives,  
It is not linen you're wearing out,  
But human creatures' lives!"

And to me there is many a "cheap" article which is dear by the price that has been paid for its cheapness, price of human health, price of human happiness, price of human life, making it costly beyond all reckoning, for it incarnates the misery of the poor.

I grant readily that things were worse before the Factory Acts were passed; but this truth only makes me desire their extension, and also a far greater insistence on sanitation than at present prevails. It is necessary that a large number of workers should co-operate in production by machinery; it is not necessary that they should be poisoned or wearied out with toil. The working-day should be

short, because mechanical toil tends to stupefy; and every factory should have a recreation-ground, prettily laid out, with facilities for games, to which the workers might resort for the intervals between the hours of labor. Thorough ventilation should ensure the wholesomeness of the air within the factory, a task which would be greatly facilitated by each factory standing alone and being tree-surrounded.

The law should also promptly concern itself with the scandalous pollution of the atmosphere and of rivers by the smoke and refuse of factories. There is no reason why every factory should not consume its own smoke, and the law already existing on this matter should be sternly enforced, by imprisonment, not by fine. A man who poisons one person is punished; a man who poisons a whole neighborhood goes free. The thick cloud of black smoke hanging over a town like Sheffield or Manchester is a sickening sight; it blights the trees, destroys the flowers, soils every house, dirties every article of clothing. Who that has lived in Manchester can forget "Manchester blacks"? It is pitiable to go through the country and see exquisite landscapes destroyed by smoke and refuse; huge chimneys belching out black torrents; streams that should be dancing in the sunlight gleaming with phosphorescent scum, and rolling along thick and black with filth. What sort of England is the Industrial Period going to leave to its successors?

If there be any truth in the scientific doctrine that the environment modifies the organism, what can be the tendency of the modifications wrought by such an environment as the Black Country? What is there of refining, of elevating, of humanising influence in those endless piles of cinders, that ruined vegetation, that pall of smoke, lighted at night by the lurid glare of the furnaces? What kind of race will that be whose mothers work in the chain-fields till the children come to the birth, and who return thither sometimes on the very day on which they have given new lives to the world?

Many people, true products of the Industrial Period, are indifferent to natural beauty, and only see in a waterfall a source of power, in a woody glen a waste of productive soil. But if, again, the environment modifies the organism, beauty is useful in the highest degree. A high human

type cannot be bred in a back slum, trained amid filth and ugliness and clangor, sent to labor ere maturity; it must be bred in pure air, trained amidst sights and sounds that are harmonious and beautiful, educated until mature; then let it turn to labor, and give back to the community the wealth of love and comfort which shielded its earlier years. On the faces of the lads and lasses who come tumbling out of factories and great warehouses at the close of every day, filling the streets with tumult and rough horseplay, is set the seal of the sordid conditions under which they live. The lack of beauty around them has made them unbeautiful, and their strident voices are fitted to pierce the din amid which they live.

In truth, in its effect on Society, the wealthy manufacturing class is far worse than the feudal nobility it is gradually pushing aside. The feudal lords lived among their tenantry, and there were ties of human sympathy between them which do not exist between the manufacturer and those whom he significantly calls his "hands". The manufacturers live away from the place in which their wealth is made, dwelling luxuriously in beautiful suburbs, and leaving the "hands" to stew in closely-packed dwellings under the shadow of the huge and unsightly factories. The division of classes becomes more and more marked; between the rich and the poor yawns an ever-widening gulf.

The tendency of Industrialism to produce castes should not be overlooked. Practical men have noted that when people have for generations lived by weaving, their children learn weaving far more easily than children who come from a mining district. If a trade becomes hereditary, the aptitude for the trade becomes marked in members of the family. And this is not well. It is a tendency to produce fixed castes of workers, instead of fully-developed various human beings. It means, if present forces go on working unrestrained, the dividing of society into castes, the formation of rigid lines of demarcation, the petrification which has befallen some older civilisations.

Over against those who laud the present state of Society with its unjustly rich and unjustly poor, with its palaces and its slums, its millionaires and its paupers, be it ours to proclaim that there is a higher ideal in life than that of being first in the race for wealth, most successful in the scramble for gold. Be it ours to declare steadfastly that

health, comfort, leisure, culture, plenty for every individual, are far more desirable than breathless struggle for existence, furious trampling down of the weak by the strong, huge fortunes accumulated out of the toil of others, to be handed down to those who have done nothing to earn them. Be it ours to maintain that the greatness of a nation depends not on the number of its great proprietors, on the wealth of its great capitalists, on the splendor of its great nobles; but on the absence of poverty among its people, on the education of its masses, on the universality of enjoyment in life.

### III.—THE CONFLICT BETWEEN SOCIAL AND ANTI-SOCIAL TENDENCIES.

The conflict between social and anti-social tendencies has existed as long as Society itself. It is the contest between the integrating and disintegrating forces, between the brute survival and the human evolution. The individual struggle for existence which had gone on through countless centuries over the whole world had become to some extent modified among the social animals, and savage man, as the highest of these, had also modified it within the limits of each community. As Society progressed slowly in civilisation, the contest went on between the surviving brutal, or savage, desire for personal accumulation and personal aggrandisement without regard for others, and the social desire for general prosperity and happiness with the readiness to subordinate the individual to the general good. It is the still-enduring conflict between these tendencies which now claims our attention. The openings for personal accumulation offered during the Industrial Period gave a great impetus to the anti-social tendencies; the codification of the laws of wealth-getting in Political Economy was seized upon for defence, as though Political Economy offered any law for the general guidance of human conduct, or held up any object as the aim of human life. In their eagerness to represent as right and useful their own greed of gain, members of the *laissez-faire* school sheltered themselves under philosophic names, and used Political Economy as though instead of laying down the conditions of wealth-getting, it had declared it to be the one duty of human beings to get wealth.

The anti-social tendencies seized on three sources of

wealth as especially promising: mines, factories, landed estates. So ruinous in each department proved their unrestricted play, that in each case law had to be called in to check their operation.

MINES.—In these the anti-social tendency of unrestricted accumulation, by competition with others, led to the employment of women and children in labor for which they were unfitted, at wages lower than those obtained by men. Women worked half-naked, with band round forehead dragging laden trucks up steep inclines. Children were born in the darkness, and grew up underground, never seeing the brightness of the sun. The most frightful demoralisation existed, and infants, sleeping at their trap-doors, were crushed beneath the hurrying truck. Manly decency, womanly modesty, childly weakness, all went down before the Juggernaut car of unrestricted competition, until the social tendency, in the guise of law, stepped in to curb the brutality of anti-social greed.

FACTORIES.—Here, again, the labor of women and children has been utilised in antagonism to the better-paid labor of men. And both women and children were scandalously overworked until law intervened to protect them. In *Our Corner* for March, 1885 (vol. v., pp. 158, 159), I gave some details of the labor imposed on children before the legislature interposed, and when we find such Acts as the Factory and Workshops Acts attacked by those who pretend to defend Liberty (see report of the 3rd annual meeting of the Liberty and Property Defence League, p. 10), we know that the liberty they defend is the liberty to plunder others unchecked, the liberty which the burglar might claim in annexing his neighbors' goods. At the present time the chain-works in Warwickshire and Worcestershire show us examples of overmuch liberty in dealing with other people's lives. Women there work semi-nude, dragging heavy chains. A young girl will be absent from her work one day, and reappearing on the morrow will excuse her languid work to the inspector on the ground: "I had a baby yesterday". Child-bearing girls, to the anti-social school, are only "hands" worth so much less in the labor market. These facts have to be faced. No vague talk of "general improvement" will avail us here. These people are suffering while we are discussing, and dilettante sympathy is of small use.

LANDED ESTATES. Here, again, the anti-social tendencies have had full swing. Taxation, levied on land as the rent to the State for the privilege of holding it, has been shifted off the land on to the people, and the land has been claimed as private property instead of as public trust. Improvements made by the tenant have been confiscated, and then the improved condition of the land has been utilised as a reason for raising the rent of the tenant who improved it. Rents have been raised to an extent the tenant could not meet, until he has become hopelessly indebted to his landlord, and so bound to him, hand and foot. Game has been preserved until the crops of farmers have been ruined by it, and until wild animals luxuriated while human beings starved. When the anti-social tendency has had full play and when it has spread abroad sufficient misery for purblind eyes to recognise, then the social tendency has asserted itself, and has established Land Courts in Ireland to fix fair rents; has secured to the tenant the results of his own labor; has permitted the farmer to kill the ground game preying on his crops.

In towns the landlord has been even a greater curse than he has been in the country. Undrained, filthy, rotten hovels have been rented by him to the poor. The slums of all great cities testify to the results of the anti-social tendency, and warn us that the deepest and widest degradation will never touch men's hearts sufficiently to overbear the desire for personal gain.

Law, and law alone, can curb these anti-social tendencies. Granted that a time will come when men shall be too noble to profit by the misery of their fellows, that time is not yet. The anti-social tendencies ruin and degrade, and the few who recognise the evil while not personally experiencing it, aided by the many who suffer from it without fully understanding it, must carry legislation which shall fetter the savage inclination to prey on human beings.

So far we have considered the play of anti-social tendencies in modern society. Let us turn now to the social tendencies, to those which make for integration.

The first of these which we will note is the tendency to co-operation. Handicapped as it is by being compelled to make its way in a society based on competition, co-operation has yet done much to better the lot of the poor. How

much it might do if everywhere it replaced competition, may be guessed at from what it has done despite the evil atmosphere which has surrounded it. Anyone who goes over the stores of the Rochdale Pioneers, who sees the great library it has gathered there, who knows the educational agencies centred there, must recognise the enormous good done by even partial co-operation under uncongenial circumstances. That productive co-operation has not succeeded as well as distributive is due partly to the fact that the co-operative workers have sought too eagerly and paid too highly for "influential names" to "float" their companies; and partly to the fact that production, under the present system, needs a larger capital to withstand trade crises than workers are able to command. Many promising enterprises have been ruined by straining after large profits, while working with an undue proportion of borrowed money, money which, in times of panic, has been suddenly withdrawn.

The social tendency is shown in the assignment of public money for educational purposes, the passing of the Education Acts, the pressure of public feeling in favor of rate-supported schools, of higher education for all at the public expense. It is shown in the demand for shorter hours of labor; the insistence that all should work; the attempts—at present only by agitation—to enact limits to the accumulation by individuals of land and capital.

And above all the social tendency is shown in the inclination to resort to law for the effecting of the desired changes; in the recognition that social, not individual effort is necessary for the reform of the social system; in the feeling that the continuance of vice and misery side by side with civilisation is intolerable, and that some means must be found to put an end to them.

The problem now set before us is how to eradicate the anti-social, and to cultivate the social, instincts in men and women. Much would be gained if once it were generally recognised that the desire for huge personal accumulation is essentially anti-social, is a survival from the brute. At the present time this desire is veiled under less offensive names, such as "business ability", "sharpness", "energy", etc., etc., but when the veil is stripped away it stands forth in its repulsive nudity. To desire sufficiency, sufficiency for health and pleasure now, and for the time when

work-power has failed, that is natural and reasonable; to desire superfluity, superfluity for ostentation and waste, that is barbaric.

Enough for each of work, of leisure, of joy; too little for none; too much for none; such is the Social Ideal. Better to strive after it worthily, and fail, than to die without striving for it at all.

#### IV.—THE RECONCILEMENT OF DIVERGING INTERESTS.

WHEREVER a school of thought has succeeded in gaining many adherents, and in holding its ground for a considerable period, it is probable that it possesses some truth, or part of some truth, valuable to humanity. Very often it may see only one side of the truth, and so may present a half as though it were the whole; and the bitterest combats are generally waged between those who hold separately the two halves which, united, would form the perfect whole. Truths which are complementary to each other are held as though they were mutually destructive, and those who should be brothers in a common strife turn their weapons against each other's breasts. Such has been the conflict between the "Individualistic" and the "Socialistic" schools; each holds a truth and does well to cling to it, for neither truth could be lost without injury to Society; the whole truth is to be found by joining the twain, for there is needed for the highest humanity the perfecting of the Individual within a highly organised Society.

Looking back for a moment at our Industrial Period, which may be taken as incarnated in the "Manchester School", we shall find that it has given to the world some important information touching production. It has proved that the productiveness of labor can be enormously increased by co-operation and the division of labor; that individual production of the ordinary necessities of life is a mistake; that it is cheaper to weave cotton goods by machinery than to leave each housekeeper to do her own spinning and weaving. The Manchester School has for ever rendered it impossible that we shall return to general production by "cottage industries": it has proved that large numbers should co-operate in production; that labor should be economised by much division; that machine-made goods should supersede hand-made in large departments of in-



dustry; these are the contributions of the Manchester School to progress. With these truths which it taught were bound up errors which raised against it a widespread revolt. Its system appeared as though it were based on the assumption that, while labor was to be co-operative, the profits arising from the associated labor were to go to the enrichment of an individual. It deified competition, and consecrated as its patterns those who could best outwit their rivals and outstrip them in the race for wealth. Its maxim, "buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest", while admirable as counsel for money-making, did not always conduce in practice to perfect honesty, and is scarcely sufficient as the end of life. "Get money; by fair means if thou canst, but by all means get money", was a somewhat brutally frank way of putting "business" morality. It tended to regard men too much as mechanical instruments of production, significantly calling men, women, and children "hands", instead of human beings. This school it was of which I spoke on p. 15 as having misused Political Economy, and as having taught as though the laws of Political Economy said "Get rich", instead of stating the conditions of getting rich; they have used it as the science of Mechanics might be used, if instead of teaching by it how a weight may be lifted with least exertion of muscular strength, it were appealed to as declaring that everyone should lift weights.

Turning to the Socialistic School, we find that it enshrines the truth that man is a social animal, and that his progress must lie in the direction of closer social union. Within this school again we find three camps, the Collectivist, the Communistic, and the Anarchist, the latter of which is really tenanted by extreme Individualists, who are separated from the ordinary Individualistic School by their desire to overturn the present social system, and to destroy the "rights of property".

The Socialists have learned from the Manchester School the conditions of wealth-production on a large scale, and seeing that industry as now conducted leads to the enriching of a few and the hopeless poverty of the many, it lays hands on the raw material and the means of production and claims these as collective property. There is, perhaps, among many of us who belong to this school too great an inclination to think that the environment is everything, and to

ignore the reaction of the organism on the environment. There is too much forgetfulness of the worse types of men and women, results of the Industrial Period, who would not be suddenly changed even if their environment could be suddenly transformed; there is too reckless a desire to overturn, without asking what curb would be kept, in the general overturning, on the degraded and criminal products of our present civilisation.

The Individualistic School, whether it is carried to the extreme Anarchist position, or maintains the sufficiency of reform along the broad lines of the present social state, brings into prominence the right of individual liberty, and the value of individual initiative. One outside, and one inside, nominal Socialism, each is the result of a dread of, a recoil against, over-much State regulation and State interference. Each lays down the vital truth that free play for human faculties, encouragement not discouragement of variations, are necessary to human progress. Each points out that a perfect State is only possible by the perfecting of individual citizens, and each is apt to lay so much stress on the organism as to overlook the immense importance of the environment. There is, of course, as I have said above, the fundamental difference between the Anarchists and those generally recognised as Individualists, that the former appear to negate, while the latter maintain, the right of private property. I have only put them together as alike in one thing, that they assert the right of the Individual against the State, while the Collectivist Socialist asserts the right of the State as against the Individual.

Pressed on the matter, however, both Individualist and Socialist are found to hold a common object; the Individualist admits that the claims of the unit must yield if they come into conflict with those of Society: the Socialist admits that he is working for a higher social state in order that each individual may have room and opportunity to develop to the highest point of which he is capable. Is there not here a possible reconciliation? Is not the ideal of all good and earnest reformers practically the same, although seen by them from different sides? True, the Individualist is not generally in favor of nationalising the means of production, and herein differs in his method from the Socialist; but is this difference any reason for their

posing as antagonists? The difference is not greater than that between the Socialist who secures to the worker the private property he has himself earned, and the Communist who would have all property common; or between the Collectivist and the Anarchist schools. Yet these can work together for common objects, while differing in much; and so should work the Socialist and the Radical Individualist against the common foe, the idle class that lives as parasite on Society.

The first matter on which all agree is that the environment must be largely modified by law. The Socialist will carry this modifying process further than will the Individualist, but here again it is a question between them of degree. Speaking as a Socialist, I desire to see laws passed which will render education tax-supported, compulsory, and secular, so that all the children of the community may receive a common education; which will fix a normal working day; which will render factory inspection more efficient, and extend inspection to shops and rooms of every kind in which employees work; which will enforce sanitary inspection and prevent it from being the farce it now is; which will enable the building of healthy houses, and provide plenty of recreation ground in every town. All these measures are imperatively necessary now, and immediately necessary, in order that the environment may be changed sufficiently for the development of healthier organisms. After a while most of them will not be needed; when all have felt the benefit of education, compulsion to educate will become a dead letter; when labor is better organised, when the words employer and employee shall no longer have any facts answering to them, when all production is for use, not for profit, there will be no need of a law limiting the working day, for none will be driven to over-long labor by the awful pressure of starvation and of fear of future distress. Factory inspection will be a very easy task when there are no longer over-greedy owners trying to wring every possible penny out of their "hands"; and the need for sanitary inspection will pass when there are no slums, and when every householder understands the conditions of health.

The organism, born into and growing up in a healthier environment, will be more vigorous and therefore more capable of evolving a higher individuality, a more marked

personality. The evolution of individuality is now checked, in some by poverty and over-hard and prolonged toil, in some by the strict conventions of fashion, in some by the unsuitability of their work to their capacities, in some by a narrow and superstitious education, in all by the unhealthy social atmosphere they are compelled to breathe. The loss to the community by waste of power, due to the crushing out of all individuality among hundreds upon hundreds of thousands, is a loss simply incalculable. When all are fully educated through childhood and youth, the faculties of each developed and trained, then each individual will be able to evolve along his own line, and the full value of each personality will enrich Society. It is often argued that a wide and thorough education will unfit people for the drudgery necessary for supporting the existence of Society, and that "some one"—never the speaker, of course!—must do the "dirty work". There are two lines of answer to the objection. First, education does *not* unfit people for doing any necessary work; it is the ignorant, superficial, "genteel" person who fears that the veneer of polish may rub off in use. The educated brain, brought to bear on manual work, economises labor and minimises drudgery. General education will certainly bring about the substitution of machinery for men and women wherever possible, for doing really unpleasant labor; and ingenuity will be exerted in the invention of labor-saving machinery when educated people find themselves face to face with repulsive kinds of toil. At present they shove off all the unpleasant work on to others: then, all being educated and there being no helot class, means will be found to avoid most of the really disagreeable work. If any such remains, which cannot be done by machinery, those who by doing it serve Society will be honored, not looked down on as they are now; or possibly some minute fraction of it will fall to the lot of each. Secondly, if it were as true as it is false that education unfitted people for "menial" work, no class has the right to keep another class in ignorance and degradation, in order that its own fingers may not be soiled. The answer to the querulous argument: "Who is to light our fires and cook our dinners, when the servants are as good as their masters?" is the very plain one: "You yourself, if you want the things done, and cannot find anyone willing

to do those services for you, in exchange for services you are able to do for them." In the coming times everyone will have to do something, and to do some one thing well. We shall not all have to light fires, for the principle of division of labor will come in, but the one who lights the fire will be a free and independent human being, not a drudge. There is no doubt that domestic labor will be very much lessened, when those who enjoy the results can no longer put off all the toil which produces them on some one else. Even now, the work of a house can be wonderfully diminished if a little intelligence be brought to bear upon it, although domestic labor-saving machines are still in their infancy. The great "servant problem" will be solved by the disappearance of servants, the wide introduction of machinery, and the division among the members of each domestic commonwealth of the various necessary duties. The prospect is really not so very terrible when quietly surveyed.

Whither is Society evolving? It is evolving towards a more highly developed individuality of its units, and towards their closer co-ordination. It is evolving towards a more generous brotherhood, a more real equality, a fuller liberty. It is evolving towards that Golden Age which poets have chanted, which dreamers have visioned, which martyrs have died for: towards that new Republic of Man, which exists now in our hope and our faith, and shall exist in reality on earth.

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